

# CINEFANTASTIQUE

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Volume 15 Number 5

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## LEGEND

Director Ridley Scott and  
makeup creator Rob Bottin  
on filming epic fantasy.

### ENEMY MINE

This big Christmas release  
had big production problems.

### AMAZING SPIELBERG

Steven Spielberg talks, and  
spins "Amazing Stories."



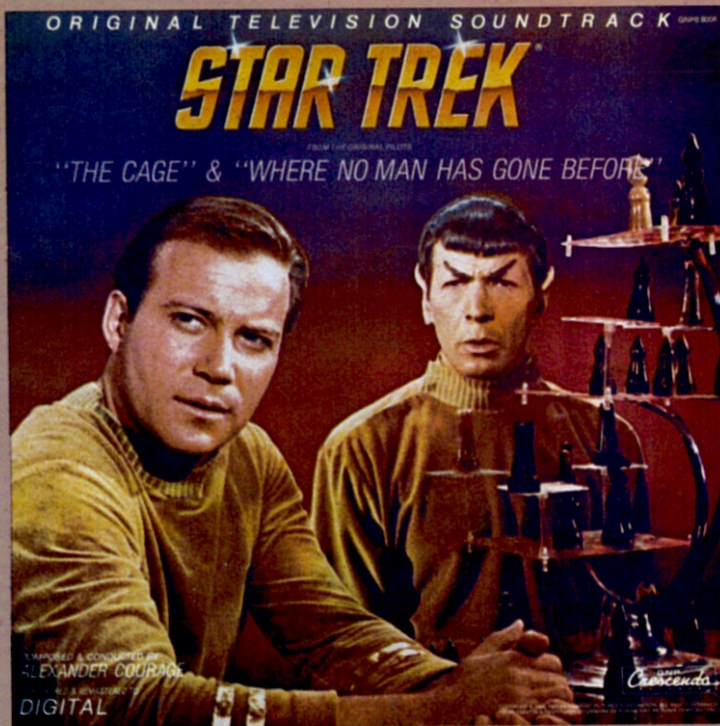
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The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

JANUARY, 1986

With ALIEN and BLADERUNNER director Ridley Scott proved himself to be one of the most visually dazzling and stylistically inventive directors working in science fiction. With LEGEND, Scott energizes the fantasy genre with the same kind of imagination and creativity that makes familiar storylines seem boldly original.

On LEGEND, Scott joined forces with makeup genius Rob Bottin, a creative collaboration that has fantasy film devotees positively bristling with anticipation. Bottin's work on films like THE THING and last summer's EXPLORERS marks him as the field's most daring conceptual artist. His makeup designs for LEGEND include what is destined to become the definitive depiction of Satanic evil, THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW's Tim Curry as The Lord of Darkness, featured on our cover.

In exclusive feature interviews this issue, both Scott and Bottin talk about bringing LEGEND to life, which reviewer Alan Jones calls "the most exquisite fantasy ever filmed." Originally due to be released November 8, distributor Universal Films pulled the picture to allow Scott more time to tailor it to American tastes, and the film is now expected to open next year. I know, it's hard to wait!

Also featured this issue is a revealing look at two big Christmas attractions. Les Paul Robley lifts the veil of secrecy surrounding 20th Century-Fox's troubled science fiction blockbuster ENEMY MINE. And in our "Coming" section Bruce Crouchet looks at JEWEL OF THE NILE, the sequel to last year's boxoffice hit ROMANCING THE STONE. "That's no fantasy film!" you say? Well read on, and remember, you heard it here first!

Frederick S. Clarke



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# STEPHEN SILVER

Dino DeLaurentiis films King's horror

by Tim Hewitt

The sheriff walks out of the courthouse, his face grim. The town mayor is waiting beneath the trees whose leaves have already turned and are now dying in the crisp autumn wind. The mayor is not a happy man. Progress has been slow in the investigation of a series of savage murders. The mayor wants action; the sheriff is at the end of his rope. They exchange words and the sheriff walks away in a huff, leaving the mayor looking very alone and small as the wind whips the fallen leaves around his feet.

From shop windows and open doorways the townspeople have been watching the same confrontation being played out over and over for the past hour. It's the most exciting thing they've seen in years, if not decades. Not the quiet, tense exchange between the town officials, but the great array of lights, microphones, cameras, and technicians for whom the exchange is being played out. Hollywood has come to the slumbering quiet of Burgaw, N.C., because a supernatural monster has been unleashed in the surrounding countryside—a werewolf born in the imagination of author Stephen King.

It isn't difficult to imagine Burgaw as Tarker's Mills, the Maine village that is the setting for Stephen King's novelette, *Cycle of the Werewolf*. Allowing for differences in temperature, the rural South has much in common with rural New England. Burgaw proper is built around a large courthouse square that dominates the little town, giving it a depression-era ambience. If Tarker's Mills doesn't look like Burgaw, it should.

Less than twenty miles down the road, a twisting two-lane blacktop crowded on each side by open farm land, is Dino De Laurentiis' North Carolina Film Corporation, the base of operations for the filmmakers who are turning *Cycle of the Werewolf* into *SILVER BULLET*. The project that began as an idea for an illustrated calendar has now emerged full blown as a feature-length motion picture scripted by Stephen King that does, in the author's words, "what should have been done with it to begin with, which is to take this character, the little boy in the



Screenwriter Stephen King poses with Dino DeLaurentiis' concept for an ape-like werewolf design, fabricated by Carlo Rambaldi.

wheelchair and to use him as the unifying character to turn it into, well, in this case a movie, what would have been a novel if it had ever been fleshed out."

As director Daniel Attias puts his cast through their paces in Burgaw, the workshops at the studio in Wilmington are bursting with activity as special effects artists put finishing touches on their work, the crowning piece being Carlo Rambaldi's articulated werewolf, a life-like suit topped with a mask capable of assuming a seemingly endless variety of facial expressions. That Rambaldi constructed the werewolf complete in five weeks time is clear indication that behind-the-scenes work has been running at fast-forward.

*SILVER BULLET* is halfway through its scheduled eight weeks

of shooting and many of the werewolf effects, including what is believed to be the largest gathering of werewolves in film history, have yet to be filmed.

The story of *SILVER BULLET* concerns the Coslaw family whose young son, Marty (Corey Haim) is crippled and bound to a wheelchair. After a series of brutal murders in and around Tarker's Mills, Marty puts the pieces together and realizes that the werewolf is, of all people, Reverend Lowe, the town minister. The only person who believes Marty's talk of werewolves is his Uncle Red (Gary Busey) who has recently given Marty a hybrid motorcycle/wheelchair emblazoned with the name "Silver Bullet." Leon Russon and Robin Groves play the Coslaw parents, and Megan Fol-

lows rounds things out as Marty's sister, Jane.

*SILVER BULLET* marks the feature debut for director Daniel Attias. Part of what he finds appealing about the project is the tight relationship between the characters. "One way to look at this film," he said, "is as a journey to an end point where the sister can tell the brother, 'I love you.' So it is very much a relationship story."

Attias, an amiable, soft-spoken man appears right at home sitting on a bench in the courthouse square, talking about the people who live in Tarker's Mills. "I'm interested in emphasizing the human element of this story because I think it's very rich in that area. Certainly it must be a scary picture, and it *is* dealing with a supernatural creature, but I think



# KING'S BULLET

story at his studios in North Carolina.



Rambaldi's final design was more wolf-like, a suit worn by Everett McGill, here seen attacking Megan Follows as Jane Coslaw.

that's handled very realistically once one accepts the impossible given that there is a werewolf running around.

"This script is beautifully laid out in terms of presentation of the characters and defining what each one's central concern is. I love being able to explore character." It is the emphasis on character, Attias believes, that will provide the proper sensation of fear. "The way I'm approaching this, the fear has to come through an acquaintance with the characters who are then put in jeopardy. The presence of the werewolf is marvelous because it creates a great sense of jeopardy that really brings out character. Once that is established I think it's quite a simple matter to create the emotion of fear."

In Carlo Rambaldi's workshop

in Wilmington, SILVER BULLET's object of fear stares menacingly at the technicians working nearby. Rambaldi's werewolf is a classic wolf head attached to a muscular, humanoid suit. This is the final design, the third in a series of attempts to realize a werewolf that would be visually impressive as well as functional.

The first of Rambaldi's designs had the appearance of being a hybrid werewolf-ape with pointed ears growing out of a slightly pugged face. "The theory on that," said Michael McCracken, Jr., the makeup artist working in conjunction with Rambaldi, "was that Dino originally wanted a werewolf that was part werewolf and part something else, a werewolf—but not exactly. Carlo went through numerous sketches to try

and get in sync with what Dino had in mind, and the first werewolf was just that. Then Dino had a change of mind and Carlo did a second werewolf. They've finally settled on the one they have now."

In his workshop, Rambaldi's eyes are as sharp, his brow as furrowed, as those of his creation. He is energetic despite having been at work since the early hours of the morning. "The werewolf is a wolf," he said, pointing with his glasses to where the wolf's head is perched. "My creation is directed toward a real wolf, and you don't need to create anything more."

There is something more about Rambaldi's werewolf, though. Even with the head separate from the body, there is something obviously and disturbingly human about the wolf's eyes. "Here,"

Rambaldi said, "let me show you," and he pushed two of the wooden levers that project from the control boxes arranged on the floor. The wolf's face twisted into an unsettling cross between a snarl and a smile. "It's wolf with human inside; not exactly a wolf. A wolf doesn't have that movement. There is no need for a wolf to smile."

Like most of Carlo Rambaldi's recent creations, the werewolf in SILVER BULLET is primarily an articulated head capable of striking any number of facial expressions through a combination of movements produced by manipulation of the mechanical "guts" inside the head, a tightly-packed collection of springs, rods, and levers that push and pull on the face. Twelve levers operate the interior mechanics. Moving a lever pulls a cable that in turn moves part of the mask's inner mechanism which causes the face to move. The operating principle is similar to that of hand brakes on a bicycle.

"The most difficult thing," Rambaldi said of designing his werewolf, "is movement; many, many movements." Like E.T., the benign alien Rambaldi built for Steven Spielberg, the werewolf must appear to talk. In one sequence the angry werewolf snarls, "Bastard Marty," and Rambaldi assures the assistant director that the werewolf will speak on cue. To make the werewolf appear to speak the necessary words requires precise manipulation of the proper levers and Rambaldi has spent a great deal of time making sure that the final effect will be the desired one.

For less demanding shots there is a second head, identical to the first in every way except mechanization. The fixed head will be used for long and medium shots that don't require the werewolf to use facial expressions. Both heads are constructed of flexible polyurethane over a metal frame. The interior mechanics of the articulated head are made of aluminum or steel depending upon the amount of stress necessary to produce the desired facial movement.

The werewolf's bodysuit fits over a heavy layer of underpadding worn by the actor to fill out the suit, giving the illusion of hunched shoulders and bulging muscles. And the actor most often in the suit is Everett McGill who





**Inset:** Illustrator Berni Wrightson's werewolf concept as seen in King's book. **Above:** Producer Dino DeLaurentiis' insistence that the film's werewolf look somehow "different," resulted in a design by Carlo Rambaldi that looked more bear-like than wolf-like.

plays both Reverend Lowe and the werewolf. "This is a good guy," McGill said of his character. "He just has a bad side, a darker side. But he's a good man. It makes things more dramatic that he's a concerned, loving man. He cares for the people of his town, but at the same time he's killing them. That dramatic range makes the role very appealing to me."

An accomplished stage actor whose film credits include *YANKS*, *BRUBAKER*, and most recently the role of Stilgar in David Lynch's *DUNE*, McGill is no stranger to the demands of roles calling for heavy makeup. He had the starring role in *QUEST FOR FIRE*, a part that required him to act without the use of understandable dialogue.

"In some ways it's nice to be known as an actor who can do those kinds of things," he said of his roles in *QUEST FOR FIRE* and *SILVER BULLET*, "but I don't relish the idea of being considered a makeup horse. I would if the industry were different, but they're very anxious to stick you with an identity, and if you're identified with that sort of role you end up doing a lot of monsters like Lon Chaney did."

McGill spent considerable time working on a walk that would be appropriate for a creature that is neither man nor beast, but a combination of both. The result is an unsettling blend of a wolf's lope and a man's walk. "What do you emphasize," McGill asks, "the canine or the human? It's tough. You try to find the right combination that will satisfy the requirements of the costume and makeup as well as your interpretation of the role."

"You can choose to play the man in the animal or the animal in the man. But you have to choose. You can't play both. I prefer the idea of the man trapped in the animal. That's the more horrifying." McGill sees Lowe as a sympathetic character, a man not responsible for all of his actions. "But there's the evil element that must be removed, so by the end he loses all sympathy."

Although McGill performs a good deal of the werewolf stunts throughout *SILVER BULLET*, insurance demands prevent him from carrying out the most demanding feats required of the monster. When McGill steps out of the werewolf garb, the role is assumed by Julius LeFlore, the stunt coordinator for *SILVER BULLET*. LeFlore's previous credits include the DeLaurentiis remake of *KING KONG*, *RE-*

*TURN OF THE JEDI*, *GHOST-BUSTERS*, and most recently Stephen King's *CAT'S EYE*.

In addition to acting as stunt double for McGill and others, LeFlore is responsible for devising the stunts that demonstrate the werewolf's tremendous strength. "We used this thing called an air ram that flings these guys fifteen to twenty feet through the air," he said, a smile crossing his face. "It's a lot of fun."

The air ram is a simple enough device—a board set atop "kickers" that provide the powerful thrust. "It works on compressed air," LeFlore explained. "You just stand on the platform, press a button, and it flings you through the air." A harness and cable device is used to similar effect. "The cable jerks on the harness the guys are wearing and they go flying backwards through the air after the

werewolf hits them."

When it was necessary for the werewolf to break through the wall of a house, special effects coordinator Joseph Mecurio designed a break-through wall of balsa wood, fortified to look like a real wall. "We weaken it a lot, even though it's balsa wood. A lot of people have the idea that just because it's balsa wood it'll break easy, but you come to find out it doesn't break that easy," Mecurio said.

And what device is used to break the wall? Mecurio laughed. "We let the stunt man do it himself." Julius LeFlore confirms that "it's a real memorable sequence, because coming through that wall is tough. It's a difficult thing because you have to hit it just right, land just right, and act like a werewolf while you're doing it. And sometimes it's like hitting a real wall."

Another scene requiring break-away structures is that in which one of the film's characters is literally pulled down through the floor by the werewolf. The scene was shot on a hydraulic set through which a hole had been cut. Technicians posing as the werewolf burst through balsa wood planks, grabbing the actor's ankles, and the hydraulic lifts drop him a foot at a time, giving the impression that the werewolf is pulling the victim through the floor, but holding him upright.

As the actor is dragged down he meets a more merciful fate at the point of a jagged floorboard. "We have a dummy torso that has a blood bag in it and a retractable stake," said Mercurio, describing the effect. "It's the same as a knife gag. The back side of the torso has an appliance that pressurizes itself and looks like the blade is coming out. It's shot from an angle so you see it going in and see it coming

Werewolf extras, made-up by Michael McCracken, Jr. for the church dream sequence, gather for lunch in the Burgaw town square.







Everett McGill as Reverend Lowe, the werewolf's conscience-stricken alter ego.

out."

One of Mercurio's more subtle effects is the full moon that brings on the transformation in Reverend Lowe. "We can't shoot certain shots and work the moon into the background, and we don't always have a full moon when we need it," Mercurio explained. The solution: make a moon, or a number of them in assorted sizes that can be called up on demand.

All it takes to make a moon is a ready supply of plexiglass and a vacuum mold. "A wooden frame, cut in a circle serves the same purpose," Mercurio said. "The force of hot air will make plexiglass expand into a perfect copy of a hole cut into plywood." After the plexiglass is shaped, the surface is textured to resemble the surface of the moon. "If it's a large moon, like the three foot moon we made, that has a little texture already in it because the plexiglass stretches so much you get crevices in it."

The finished moon is suspended by wire within the camera's view when needed, illuminated by a spotlight, and the scene is set for a werewolf, even if there's only a quarter moon in the sky.

With the moon high in the sky and the werewolf on the prowl, there's much mayhem keeping makeup artist Michael McCracken, Jr. busy. "They're pushing it a little more toward an R rating," he said as he sat down to talk. "Up until now there was some indecision, but now they're going to pull out the stops and really go for it." Plans are to reshoot several sequences, including the scene of the werewolf pulling his victim through the floor. "It's not bloody enough," Joseph Mercurio said of the scrapped scene.

One scene that doesn't require reshooting is that in which a hunter in the posse searching for the werewolf has an unfortunate encounter and comes away with his face torn off. The scene takes place in a meadow hung with dense fog through which the were-

wolf is creeping. Suddenly the hunter is pulled beneath the fog that begins to churn with signs of a struggle. Then, as suddenly as he was pulled under, the hunter rises briefly from the fog, his face ripped to shreds by the still unseen werewolf.

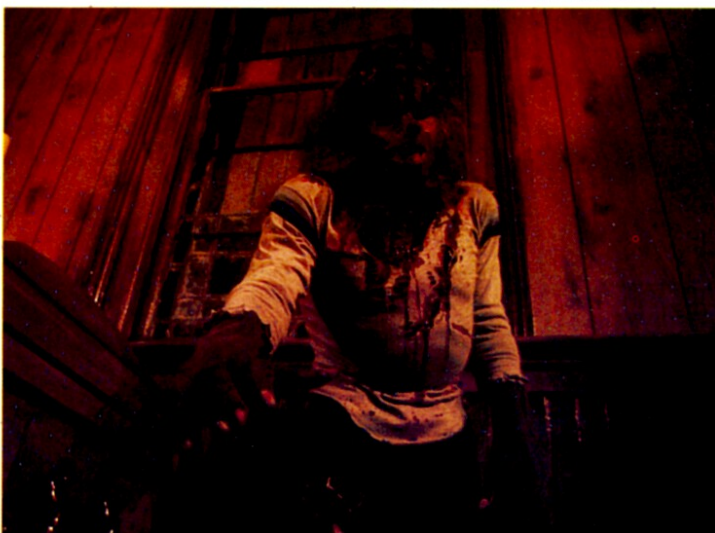
McCracken lights a cigarette and puffs on it as he talks. "Now there's some problems there, in getting the actor from his real face to makeup, because if you stop the camera and do makeup on him, you'll get a jump in the fog. You just can't keep it level. There's also a problem with putting someone under the fog already made up because they could pass out under there.

"We thought about having the actor wear a mask of his real face over the makeup. That way he could go under the fog, pull the thing off, and then come up looking like his face has been ripped off. That's a bit risky though, and for take two it would really be a bitch."

McCracken finally settled on using a dummy that could be placed beneath the fog in advance of the shot, then raised above the fog for the shock effect after the werewolf attack.

The part of SILVER BULLET that is most exciting for McCracken

One of McCracken's werewolves from Reverend Lowe's church dream.



is a hallucination sequence during which the entire congregation of Reverend Lowe's church transforms into werewolves during a funeral for one of Lowe's victims. Before Lowe's eyes the church is transformed into a scene of pure chaos as the werewolf congregation goes wild, dancing and snarling, flipping through the air, and generally wreaking havoc. It will be the largest collection of werewolves ever seen on film.

Since the scene required rather strenuous activity on the part of many of the werewolves, the production company recruited gymnasts and dancers. "We auditioned about one hundred and fifty people," said Julius LeFlore, "and we got some pretty good gymnasts to do the acrobatics and the dancers were trained to do that really weird looking walk Everett does. He went down and showed them how to do it."

To distinguish between the real werewolf and those in Lowe's hallucination, a different design was used. The werewolves in Lowe's dream are clearly more humanoid than the Lowe werewolf. They are clearly werewolves, but their features are more human than canine. To give them a more subtle, but striking difference, McCracken opted against covering the actors' eyes with lenses. The result is werewolves with blue eyes, grey eyes, green eyes—whatever the actors' natural eye color. "It gives them a really quirky look," McCracken said.

The forty actors selected to portray the werewolves were divided into three teams. McCracken explained: "The B team's faces can be operated with a tongue device. By moving the device inside the mask they can make the face snarl. The A team has radio operation providing three levels of movement in the face. They have ear, forehead, and mouth movement. The C team functions mainly as background. There's no movement in the mask itself for them.



Corey Haim as handicapped hero Marty Coslaw, astride the "Silver Bullet," a combination wheelchair and motorcycle.

Their's is purely body movement."

McCracken designed the werewolves for the hallucination scene and also provided the makeup effects that transform Everett McGill from the kindly Reverend Lowe to the ferocious Carlo Rambaldi werewolf. Rather than use any one method in executing the transformation McCracken chose several.

"During the final transformation we'll use a series of fades and dissolves. It's the classic Lon Chaney transformation, slow and gentle." Other transformation scenes make use of bladder effects that will distort McGill's face on camera as he begins to change.

"We have him changing into the werewolf in very explosive, very dynamic ways," McCracken said. When pressed for elaboration on "explosive," he added, "We've got all kinds of new things we're hoping will work out. But we're facing a problem with time. Shooting a single transformation can take all day, and we've got forty werewolves to change."

In Burgaw, Daniel Attias watches the sky turn pink as darkness gathers. The shadows stretch across storefront windows bearing signs announcing rewards for the capture of the full-moon killer. One of Joseph Mercurio's plexiglass moons is hoisted above the town and fear grips the residents of Tarker's Mills once more. But the residents of Burgaw brave the night air and come out to watch. They group together around the fringe of the film crew's set-up. After all, there's safety in numbers. And tonight, there might be a werewolf on the loose. There just might . . . □



# COMING

## ONCE BITTEN

*Lady vampire bites Halloween funny bone in this horror parody starring Lauren Hutton.*

By Marc Shapiro

Poking film fun at vampires can be risky business. George Hamilton was able to pull-off blood sucking laughs in *LOVE AT FIRST BITE* but the late actor David Niven could not prevent *OLD DRACULA* from dying an unfunny death. But the uncertainty of goofing on the Dracula legend has not stopped director Howard Storm in *ONCE BITTEN* from giving the comic side another shot. Storm began his directorial career as an aide to Woody Allen on comedies like *TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN* and *BANANAS*.

*ONCE BITTEN* is a Samuel Goldwyn presentation, budgeted at \$3.2 million, starring Lauren Hutton, Cleavon Little, Jim Carrey and Karen Kopins, and was filmed over a 45-day shooting schedule in and around Los Angeles.

*ONCE BITTEN* tells the story of a centuries old lady vampire (Lauren Hutton) who must regularly have a series of three blood snacks from a male virgin in order to maintain her youthful appearance. Her target is a group of horny teenagers who are trying to lose the very thing she covets. The countess latches onto her victim (Jim Carrey) who, in turn, begins to take on vampiric character-

istics after two blood letting encounters. Karen Kopins plays Carrey's loving but increasingly perplexed sweetheart.

Black comic Cleavon Little plays Hutton's dedicated and equally ageless companion. Little, who played "Black" Bart in Mel Brooks' *BLAZING SADDLES*, likened his vampire role to that earlier film. "I always had two fantasies about roles I wanted to play in the movies," he said. "One was to do a western, the other was to play a vampire." Storm makes no bones about the fact that *ONCE BITTEN*, written by David Hines, Jeff Hause and Jonathan Roberts, is being directed at a teenage market.

"But I don't want to give the impression that this is a *PORKY'S* kind of low class comedy," said Storm, who is making his film directing debut after directing episodes of such television hits as *TAXI* and *MORK AND MINDY*. "There's no obvious sex jokes and no tits and ass. This is a comedy about a vampire and there's nothing in the film that strays from that concept."

Storm claimed that featuring a female vampire in the storyline will get a valid message across amid the laughs. "The Countess is looking for the magic elixir to keep her young,"



Vampire Lauren Hutton infuses teenager Jim Carrey with a new kind of life.

he said. "She knows she's getting old and will do whatever is necessary to keep herself young. Getting older is something all women have to face."

Message aside, Storm does not hedge on the fact that the film is being played strictly for laughs. "This is satire and once you approach any subject with the idea of doing satire, you're pretty much free to do what you like," said Storm. "If we were claiming to be redoing *DRACULA* then we could be accused of muddying up the legend. But we're not so we have the freedom to play around a bit."

*ONCE BITTEN* is relatively special effects free. All of the bloodletting is done off screen. Masks used in the film's handful of aging scenes

were created by makeup man Steve LaPorte. Adding to the comical nature of the film is the stylistically modern but totally bizarre vampire's mansion created by production designer Gene Rudolf (noted for his work on *DINER* and *RAGING BULL*) and the atmospheric photography of Adam Greenberg, who recently brought *THE TERMINATOR* to life.

The film, produced by Dimitri Villard and Robby Wald, opens November 15. Villard produced *TIME WALKER* (13:5:61), a mummy film, released by New World in 1982. He is currently producing *THE NAVIGATOR*, a big-budget fantasy adventure for Producers Sales Organization and Walt Disney. □

## INDIANA MICKEY?

*George Lucas and Walt Disney Productions announce joint projects.*

He's not a film star—yet. Indiana Mickey, part of an exhibit of mechanized dioramas on display at Walt Disney World based on hit motion pictures, the character is more of a symbol of the recent partnership formed by George Lucas and Walt Disney Productions, the biggest names in fantasy and family entertainment.

*CAPTAIN EO* is the first film project to emerge from the new partnership, and the team of creative artists assembled to make it reads like a list Jiminy Cricket wished for on a star. The film is termed by Disney "a musical space fantasy" and stars Michael Jackson, who will also write, produce and sing its original songs. The director is two-time Oscar winner Francis Ford Coppola. George Lucas acts as executive producer.

The film is to premiere in 1986 and

play exclusively at Epcot Center's Kodak Imagination Pavillion in Walt Disney World in Florida and at a new theatre to be built in the Tomorrowland section of Disneyland in California. The production is being filmed in an innovative 3-D process engineered by Disney's WED Enterprises in cooperation with Kodak research scientists. Technicians at Lucasfilm will add the special effects refinements.

Said Michael D. Eisner, the chairman and chief executive officer of Walt Disney Productions, who jointly announced the project with Lucas, "We wish to enhance Disney's role as a technical innovator now and in the future. State-of-the-art technology is currently being used in the design of the two theatres [by Kodak] that will showcase this unique sight, sound and environmental experience."

Other distinguished members of the *CAPTAIN EO* production team include producer Rusty Lemorande, who co-produced *YENTL*, choreographer Jeffrey Hornaday (*FLASHDANCE*, *A CHORUS LINE*), John Napier, theme parks designer who did the sets for the Tony Award-winning musical "Cats," lighting and photographic consultant Vittorio Storraro (*APOCALYPSE NOW*), and art director Geoffrey Kirkland (*THE RIGHT STUFF*).

*CAPTAIN EO* marks the second project to be announced jointly by Lucas and Disney in their partnership to develop innovative entertainment ideas. Announced last February were theme park attractions to be designed and built based on the Lucas *STAR WARS* series.

Can Indiana Mickey be far behind? □



Diorama on display at Walt Disney World by Disney artists headed by Jim McNalis.



# PSYCHO III

by C. V. Drake

Not much information about the plot of PSYCHO III is being released by Universal Studios. The story picks up three weeks after the ending of PSYCHO II. Norman Bates is very much present and as disturbed as ever. Robert Alan Browne is back as the troublesome owner of Statler's diner, where Norman used to work. Mother is back, and there is special makeup by Mike Westmore, so it isn't too surprising that Sheriff Hunt (Hugh Gillin) turns up knocking on the door of the Bates house with a search warrant—and a swamp on the Universal backlot is being checked for missing persons . . .

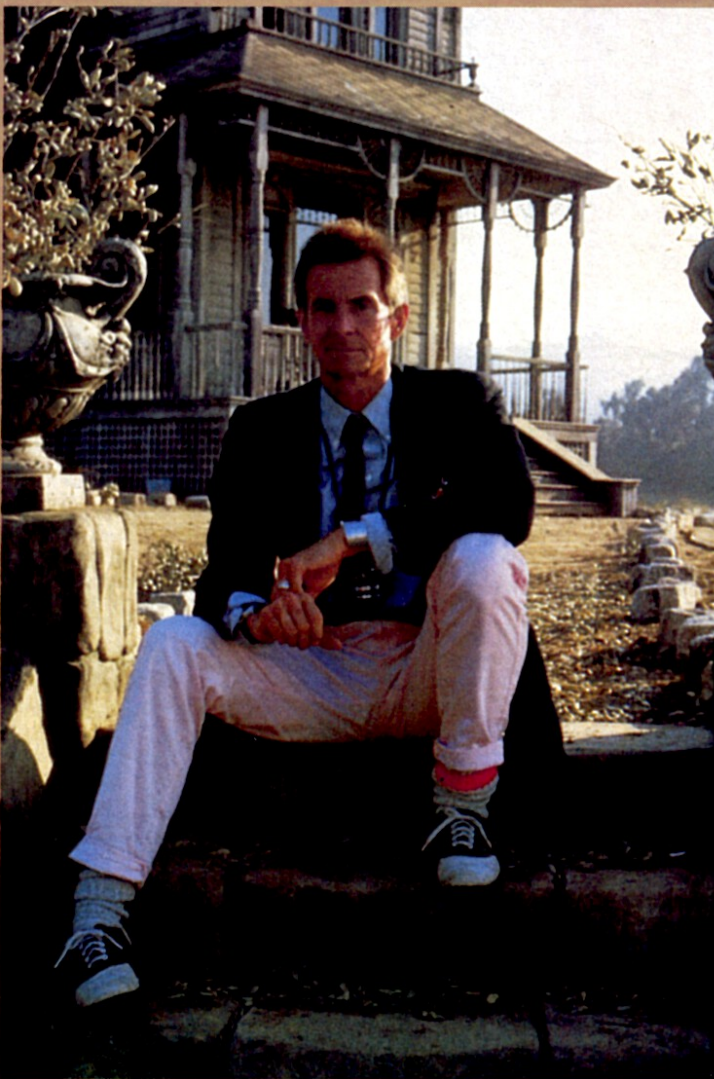
The producer of PSYCHO III is Hilton Green, who produced PSYCHO II and who was associated with Hitchcock as an assistant director on the original PSYCHO and the ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS television series. Green signed on as producer of PSYCHO III after the screenplay by Charles Edward Pogue had been written. Tom Holland, author of FRIGHT NIGHT, reportedly turned down the assignment. Though Green did not participate in the script's development, he is quite pleased with it. Green says it has less blood and gore than PSYCHO II, leaving more to the imagination.

Anthony Perkins decided he'd like to direct PSYCHO III after reading Pogue's screenplay. "It's a beautifully written script, and it's as tight as any script I have ever read," said Perkins. "It was the script, its strength and eloquence, that gave me the courage to take on the assignment. It was sent to me, actually, as an acting job and . . . as I put the last cover down, I said, I want to direct this. It was my admiration for what had been written, rather than my aspirations as a director."

Asked how he felt about making a sequel, Perkins said "There's nothing harder to commit than a sequel. That's the toughest kind of moviemaking, the most challenging kind of moviemaking."

Is Universal taking a big risk letting a first-time director direct himself in such a potentially big moneymaker? Actually there's not a whole lot of economic risk for this production. PSYCHO II made its money back within about two weeks of its release. Though PSYCHO III is being produced on

## Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates —still crazy after all these years, only in this sequel he's directing.



Anthony Perkins, who created the role of Norman Bates for Alfred Hitchcock in PSYCHO (1960), returns to the role in PSYCHO III and tries his hand at directing.

a somewhat higher budget than its predecessor, it is definitely a modestly budgeted film by today's standards. The fact that Anthony Perkins is also the director should, if anything, add to the box-office attraction.

Besides the economic factors, Anthony Perkins is an intelligent, sensitive man who has obviously learned a lot from the many fine directors with whom he has worked. "Nobody knows the Norman Bates character better than

Tony Perkins who created him," observed Green. "His extensive experience in motion pictures and as a stage director and star of many New York and touring company plays certainly qualifies him to do an outstanding job as director/star of PSYCHO III." After watching Perkins direct and listening to him talk about the film, it's quite clear he knows what he's doing and is confident about the project.

Perkins said that directing was

just about what he had expected. "My plan as a director is to present the script straightforwardly, and without the inevitable director's

touches, which unfortunately most fledgling directors try to inject with a heavy hypodermic," he said. "So it will be a pretty objectively told tale. I think when you're dealing with the heightened melodrama and the heightened gothic intensity of these stories, you can't decorate that too much with your own imagination or it becomes too much, it becomes too rich. I think that PSYCHO is a perfect example. It's a very plainly told tale. There are no embellishments to it."

Perkins had the entire PSYCHO III script storyboarded, which he discussed with editor Dave Blewitt before production began. Blewitt edited THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY (1978), received an Academy Award nomination for THE COMPETITION (1980), and was co-editor of GHOST-BUSTERS (1984). Blewitt is editing the PSYCHO III footage as it comes from the lab, and said it is cutting well.

Special makeup for PSYCHO III is being done by Michael Westmore, a third-generation member of the dynasty that in the golden days of Hollywood headed the makeup departments of practically every studio. Westmore has had 10 Emmy nominations for outstanding television makeup including FRANKENSTEIN (1973), LAND OF THE LOST (1976), GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES (1978), and THE DAY AFTER (1984). He won an Emmy in 1976 for ELEANOR AND FRANKLIN.

The cast of PSYCHO III also includes Diana Scarwid, Jeff Fahey, Roberta Maxwell, Gary Bayer, Karen Hensel, Jack Murdoch, and Hugo L. Stanger. Besides Anthony Perkins and Robert Alan Brown, Hugh Gillin continues his role as Sheriff Hunt from PSYCHO II. Gillin is quite comfortable in the role, having played small town cops in films dating back at least to PAPER MOON (1973).

Though Anthony Perkins denied he's considering further sequels, some wag on the production crew had stenciled "save for PSYCHO IV" on the backs of several parts of the sets. It was intended as a joke, but some of those same sets were used in PSYCHO II. Maybe it really isn't that much of a joke after all. □



# Transylvania 6-5000

Mel Brooks protege Rudy DeLuca writes and directs an affectionate homage to the monsters we all know and love.

by Alan Jones

New World Picture's Halloween release, TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000 is described as "a monstrous horror comedy." Even the title is a joke for those who can remember Glenn Miller's hit tune "Pennsylvania 6-5000." Starring Jeff Goldblum, Ed Begley, Jr., Joseph Bologna, Carol Kane, John Byner and Geena Davis, the film is being directed by one-time Mel Brooks alumnus Rudy DeLuca, and was shot on location in Yugoslavia, in the village of Samobor and at Mokrice Castle, now a tourist hotel situated a few miles from Zagreb.

DeLuca's script incorporates many beloved horror characters in a story about two reporters for a sleazy supermarket tabloid who are sent to Transylvania to write a sensational story headlined *Frankenstein Lives*. They include Hunyadi, an ersatz Mary Shelley-inspired creature; Odette, an over-sexed vampiress; the Wolfman (whose name was changed from Lawrence Talbot to Malbot to avoid objections from copyright

The Mummy (Ksenija Prohaska), victim of a bum wrap. The film's makeups are by Yugoslav artist Halid Redzebasic.



Ed Begley, Jr., bumps into Hunyadi (Peter Buntic), a Frankenstein stand-in.

holder Universal); the Mummy, who appears to be the victim of a bad wrap job; the Twisted Man, literally a human pretzel. Plus Radu and Lupi, two hunchbacks without hunches.

One of the many twists to DeLuca's story is that the Transylvania depicted couldn't be further removed from "The Dark Country" of old. It's hip, sunny and about as ominous as Disneyland on a Sunday afternoon—the locals are far more interested in hustling tourists than they are in recounting superstitious legends. But all is not what it seems, as Goldblum and Begley find out when they cross paths with Bologna's Dr. Malavaqua.

DeLuca had tried to get TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000 off the ground for years. The film is a project of Mace Neufeld Productions, produced by Thomas H. Brodek. Neufeld is no newcomer to the genre. With Harvey Bernhard, Neufeld made THE OMEN trilogy. And with Brodek he produced Tobe Hooper's FUNHOUSE. When Neufeld read DeLuca's script it was already under option to Paul Lichtman, U.S. representative of Yugoslavian state-based Jadran Films—and had been for years. Neufeld knew the film could be shot economically in Yugoslavia for under \$4 million even though the inflation rate there currently stands at 100%. Neufeld arranged with Lichtman to option the script,

only to get turned down at nearly every major studio for financing.

"I had to offer it to MGM where I currently base my operations," said Neufeld, but when they turned it down I was free to take it where I pleased." Universal, Warner Brothers, PSO, Silver Screen Partners, and HBO all nixed it too, mainly because they had seen the script in some other form over the years and it is notoriously difficult to get people reinterested, according to Neufeld. Bob Rehme wanted the project after he left Universal to head up production at New World Pictures.

"We began simultaneous negotiations with New World and Jadran Films," said Neufeld. "Lichtman brought in the multinational

corporation Dow Chemicals, who had frozen dinars [the currency in Yugoslavia], and were anxious to use them. Jadran and Dow were going to split the Yugoslavian budget between them, but Dow decided to take on the entire below the line budget. It was a complicated deal."

Originally scheduled to start last October, the negotiations dragged on until Neufeld realized bad weather would dog the production and postponed TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000 until the Spring. That gave Neufeld more time to cast the picture. "Frankly I didn't think we would be able to assemble a cast of this caliber," he said. "But Jeff Goldblum and Ed Begley, Jr., just fell in love with the script. The other actors became attracted accordingly. A lot of the cast has worked together before which happily makes it an ensemble piece in the truest sense."

Neufeld is convinced that this spoof won't go the way of so many before it—PANDEMONIUM, SPACESHIP, NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CLASS REUNION, and SATURDAY THE 14TH, to name a few of the recent misfires. Neufeld pegs his hopes on the ensemble cast and DeLuca's comedy background.

DeLuca started his professional career by writing comedy material for nightclub comedians and television comics. The artists he has been involved with include Sammy

continued on page 53

Begley gets a checkup from Mad Doctor Joseph Bologna and his Wolfman assistant.







Ray Harryhausen during his appearance at the 1985 San Jose Film Festival.

## RAY HARRYHAUSEN RETIRES ANNOUNCEMENT AT SAN JOSE FESTIVAL

By Lawrence French

Ray Harryhausen, whose last film, *CLASH OF THE TITANS*, was released four years ago, recently disclosed that it may well become his swan song. Harryhausen made the revelation to a startled audience earlier this year at the San Jose Film Festival, where he was honored with an award for his outstanding contribution to fantasy in films. The festival is the first in America to devote itself exclusively to fantasy in the cinema.

When asked about his involvement in a new Greek mythology epic, *FORCE OF THE TROJANS*, to be produced by his longtime partner Charles H. Schneer, Harryhausen said "I don't think I'll be involved. When you devote too much time to a film, you have very little time to see your family. Now I'm spending a lot of time getting reacquainted with my family."

Harryhausen did do some pre-production work on the film, but maintained he would not become involved with the time-consuming effects work, even if Schneer were to try to convince him otherwise. "I really can't see that happening," said Harryhausen. "I've been spending my time doing the things I've really wanted to do for a long while, but never had the time for. I've been making bronze figures from some of the characters we used in our films, and many other things." Harryhausen has been spending a lot of time fixing up his summer home in Marbella, Spain. He presently lives in London and also maintains a house in Los Angeles.

Harryhausen also confirmed

that if Charles H. Schneer is able to get *FORCE OF THE TROJANS* into production, the effects work would probably be handled by George Lucas' ILM facility, although Harryhausen didn't know for certain what arrangements might eventually be made.

If Harryhausen does indeed retire, the art of stop-motion animation may possibly go the way of the dinosaur, becoming extinct. "I certainly hope not!" exclaimed Harryhausen. "There are still many young men who are pursuing it. Jim Danforth has certainly got several projects up his sleeve, and I think Phil Tippett is making a picture about dinosaurs." Unfortunately, neither Danforth nor Tippett have been able to launch a full-scale animation project in the Harryhausen/Willis O'Brien tradition, although they have contributed short sequences to several films.

After the release of *CLASH OF THE TITANS* Harryhausen tried to launch *PEOPLE OF THE MIST* with director Michael Winner, but was unable to raise the financing. While he did not say so, Harryhausen's decision to retire may be related to the plethora of effects laden productions on the market today.

"When we started out in the fifties, we were the only ones doing fantasy," said Harryhausen. "We like to think we kept it alive. Now there are so many companies, everything's been done. In the good old days you looked forward to going to the movies on Saturday night, it was a big event in your life. Today, you have all sorts of entertainments. Audiences are bombarded with television, and jaded." □

## HIGHLANDER

Rock video whiz kid Russell Mulcahy directs Sean Connery in an epic fantasy adventure.

By Alan Jones

With a Duran Duran movie in the can, *HEAVY METAL—THE MOVIE* on ice, and a treatment of William Burroughs' *The Wild Boys* being readied, rock video whiz-kid Russell Mulcahy started shooting his new film *HIGHLANDER* at the end of April. Budgeted at \$12 million with locations in New York, London and Scotland, Mulcahy describes *HIGHLANDER* as, "An epic fantasy adventure cum modern love story containing violence of a magical and mystical nature."

*HIGHLANDER*, which spans four centuries, concerns the ultimate battle between six immortals who gather in contemporary New York to fight for supremacy and the prize of a unique and unimaginable power. Christopher Lambert plays McCloud, the hero, and Sean Connery is his 2000 year-old Spanish/Egyptian guide and mentor, Ramirez. Mulcahy chose *HIGHLANDER* for his second feature because of its highly original concept.

"The lack of commercial success for *RAZORBACK* made the choice really important," he said. "I read loads of scripts but nothing grabbed me. The basic idea behind *HEAVY METAL—THE MOVIE* was very good but the other two directors involved [Scott Millan and Brian Grant] and I couldn't agree on a central storyline. We didn't want a *TWILIGHT ZONE* type of concept but more of an integration of themes that each director could take over at various points. Then *HIGHLANDER* came along and I thought it was one of the most amazing scripts I'd ever read. I could visualize it instantly as the world depicted was so refreshing and different. The structure was so clever that it grabbed me instantly."

*HIGHLANDER* is being financed by Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment who own the world distribution rights. In the U.S. the film will be released by 20th Century-Fox in the summer of 1986. The producers are Peter Davis and Bill Panzer whose last film was *THE OSTERMAN WEEKEND*, and the screenplay is written by Gregory Widen, Peter Bellwood and Larry Ferguson.

"Widen wrote it as a thesis at UCLA," said Mulcahy. "He got the idea for the story from a trip he made to England. He was standing in the Tower of London looking at all the armory and it suddenly crossed his mind how interesting it would be if he was there with a few friends saying, 'do you remember when I wore



Christopher Lambert, as one of six immortals, vies for unimaginable power.

that suit of armor and what battle I used that sword in.' That's where the idea for *HIGHLANDER* sprang from. He wrote a treatment, then a screenplay and the two other guys did the rewrites. There have been six altogether and I've been involved in the last three."

*HIGHLANDER* will be shot on a tight 11 week schedule centered at the new Jacob Street studios based in the heart of London's Docklands area. "The money will be tight but it will all be up there on the screen," said Mulcahy. "It's a case of the 'And then there was a battle' syndrome. In the *HIGHLANDER* script it says, 'A four story skyscraper is destroyed.' How we destroy it exactly is going to cost a lot of money."

Mulcahy's crew includes Gerry Fisher as director of photography, 1984's production designer Alan Cameron, *BRAZIL*'s costume designer Jim Acheson, and *LIFE FORCE*'s special makeup supervisor Nick Malley. Mulcahy wants *HIGHLANDER* "to have a rocket opening" and to this end, the first location in New York is Madison Square Garden where a live wrestling match will be filmed with a Skycam to sweep over the audience.

Mulcahy intends to keep us constantly dazzled with various special effects including human tornados, body energy light shows and a new variation on special makeup techniques involving ice sculptures. "I want most of the effects to be done on the floor with a minimum of optical additions," said Mulcahy. □



# JEWEL OF THE NILE

Sequel to *ROMANCING THE STONE* features a secret, Yoda-like fantasy character.

By Bruce Crouchet

Even though *ROMANCING THE STONE* derived its thrills from its wildly improbable South American adventure, it featured a gritty, down-to-earth realism that set it squarely apart from the kind of fantasy action popularized by *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*. Not so the sequel, *JEWEL OF THE NILE*, which muscles in on Indiana Jones' territory.

Although *ROMANCING THE STONE* involved the adventurers, played by Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner, with a priceless emerald, the *JEWEL OF THE NILE* they seek in the sequel is no gem. The Jewel in the script, written by Mark Rosenthal and Lawrence Konner, is a Yoda-like fantasy character, guarded by five powerful Suni warriors, whirling dervishes played by The Flying Karamazov Brothers, a unique juggling and comedy act.

20th Century-Fox, which opens *JEWEL OF THE NILE* December 13, plans to keep the nature of the Jewel a secret, and has put a gag on the film's cast and crew to prevent unwanted publicity. Young cinematographer Jan DeBont, who photographed the film, as well as Warner Bros up-and-coming *CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR*, was polite but firm in not discussing the film's secret.

"Actually, I don't know what I can tell you that won't give too much of the film away," he said. "I can say that one of our more difficult scenes, the film's climax in fact, was a huge night scene that culminates in a tremendous light show involving thousands of extras. It took a plane load of equipment from London to get



Adventurer Jack Colton, played by producer Michael Douglas, and romance novelist Joan Wilder (Kathleen Turner), cross paths again with Ralph (Danny DeVito), in a race to find the precious Jewel of the title, actually a Yoda-like fantasy character.

the scene done." DeBont credits Robin Brown, the man in charge of special effects, with creating some of the film's complicated matte work and bluescreen shots.

*JEWEL OF THE NILE* picks up where the first film left off, following former romance novelist Joan Wilder (Kathleen Turner) and her hero/lover, adventurer Jack Colton (Michael Douglas), as they sail into a decidedly unusual adventure, this time in exotic North Africa by way of the French Riviera. But as in *ROMANCING THE STONE* they aren't alone. Following in their wake like a bad smell is their implacable enemy Ralph (Danny DeVito), an amoral, greedy, and utterly annoying villain who made their first South American excursion such a memorable one.

As in the previous film, Michael Douglas produced as well as starred in this latest romantic adventure. Douglas put together an international army of filmmakers and technicians who hail from the U.S., England, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, and Germany. Directed by Lewis Teague (*CUJO*, *CAT'S EYE*) the cameras began rolling in harsh Moroccan locations on April 22, and principal photography was completed at the LaVictorine studio in Nice, France.

DeBont sees *JEWEL OF THE NILE* as having presented him with some of the most intriguing and complex cinematic challenges he has yet faced in his career. A native of Holland, DeBont received his early training at the film academy in Amsterdam. His previous screen credits

include *ALL THE RIGHT MOVES* and *CUJO*, the latter also for director Lewis Teague.

On location in Morocco, DeBont found himself battling sandstorms or filming action sequences in daily temperatures as high as 135 degrees. "It was certainly one of the most complicated shoots I've ever done," he said. "Because of the extreme temperatures we had to do almost every scene just once, so we had about seven cameras at work for every set up. It was very complex trying to angle those cameras and shoot the scene in such a way that the cameras wouldn't show up in the final footage."

Having worked in Europe where budgets are necessarily tight DeBont has made the transition smoothly from smaller movies to the more logistically complex big budget films made by Hollywood. Recognizing the inherent tradeoffs of such transitions, DeBont acknowledges "there is something satisfying about a smaller film with a tighter budget—you have to work harder all around, do everything yourself, because you can't afford elaborate special effects teams to do things for you. Working on the big budget films, I get to be my own camera operator occasionally but on a smaller film it's a given that you operate your camera always.

"Also, there is tighter creative control on smaller films," continued DeBont. On something the size of *JEWEL OF THE NILE* for instance, there is no room for instant creativity. You have to plan things far in advance. The moment you start changing things you find that the size of the production inhibits what you want to do. Things are simply too big to change." □

## BOXOFFICE SURVEY: GENRE DROP NEARLY DOUBLES FILMS IN GENERAL

An analysis of the Top Grossing Films, as reported weekly by *Variety*, reveals that in the first three quarters of 1985, (39 weeks through 10/2) revenue from horror, fantasy, and science fiction films dropped a substantial 15.9% compared to last year. While the boxoffice for films in general also dropped, it fell only by 8.1%, about half as much. Overall though, genre films still impacted significantly on the marketplace, capturing an impressive 38.5% of total boxoffice (compared with 42.1% at this time last year).

Of the 319 films that comprise the weekly listings, 100 or 31.3% were genre titles. There were 37

science fiction films (compared to 24 last year), accounting for 11.6% of the genre total, and 17.9% of all boxoffice; 32 fantasy films (28 last year), 10.0% of the genre total and 14.7% of all receipts; and 31 horror films (45 last year), 9.7% of the genre take and 5.9% of all revenue.

Top-grossing genre films in the *Variety* totals are listed at right (through 10/9). Titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks each title made it into the Top 50 listings since January 1. The dollar amounts listed represent only a small, scientific sample of a film's total earnings (about one fourth of a film's

domestic gross).

Smash business by *BACK TO THE FUTURE* and *COCOON* caused revenue from science fiction films to more than double over last year, when substantially fewer films of this genre were in release. Correspondingly, without a fantasy smash like *GHOSTBUSTERS* (the #1 boxoffice hit last year), revenue from fantasy films dropped nearly in half. While the number of horror films decreased, solid performers from major distributors like *FRIGHT NIGHT* and *FRIDAY THE 13TH—A NEW BEGINNING* caused horror revenue to jump by nearly a third.

### TOP GENRE FILMS OF '85

BACK TO THE FUTURE (sf, 14)	\$39,403,290
COCOON (sf, 15)	\$21,066,781
A VIEW TO A KILL (sf, 11)	\$13,064,628
THE GOONIES (f, 10)	\$12,731,339
MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME (sf, 10)	\$10,606,483
PEE WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE (f, 8)	\$10,051,010
PALE RIDER (f, 7)	\$ 8,637,816
THE LAST DRAGON (f, 8)	\$ 8,476,430
DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN (f, 20)	\$ 8,288,911
FRIGHT NIGHT (h, 9)	\$ 6,804,204
TEEN WOLF (f, 6)	\$ 5,887,756
FRIDAY THE 13TH—A NEW BEGINNING (h, 6)	\$ 5,879,691
E.T. (re-rel, sf, 6)	\$ 5,823,050
PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO (f, 21)	\$ 5,379,668



# ENEMY MINE

**This SF parable about racial prejudice had a lot of makeup and production problems.**

By Les Paul Robley

It sounds like a science fiction reworking of *HELL IN THE PACIFIC*, with a dash of *THE DEFIANT ONES* thrown in... Two enemy space pilots battling in a distant sun system—one an earthman named Davidge (Dennis Quaid); the other Jeriba, a Drac from the planet Dracon (Louis Gosset, Jr.), a proud, complex, reptilian being—crash on a hostile planet. The planet Fyrine IV is perpetually bombarded by meteor storms and inhabited by deadly carnivores. The fate of Davidge and Jeriba hinges on their ability to overcome a centuries-old inbred hatred and accept the other on his own strange terms.

The story shifts abruptly when the alien gives birth to a baby Drac (the species evidently is asexual), and dies in the process. This apparently happens about one-third of the way into the story. The remainder of the film deals with the raising of the baby Drac by Davidge as the two learn to survive

20th Century-Fox shrouded the film in secrecy even though the book will be out a month before it opens on December 20.

together amid the harsh elements.

Down the line the baby is abducted by human space marauders and put to work in the enemy mine of the title. It's up to Davidge to rescue the Drac from its new life of slavery. The screenplay is by Edward Khmara (*LADY-HAWKE*), based on a prize-winning novella by Barry Longyear.

Sound familiar? That may be why distributor 20th Century-Fox is trying to keep the film's story under wraps. *ENEMY MINE*'s modern racial allegory on the vices of bigotry and prejudice is furthered by the rumor that the majority of the Dracs are played by blacks. Since director Wolfgang (THE NEVERENDING STORY) Petersen claims that you hardly see Lou Gosset the actor, one wonders whether we'll really be able to distinguish this normally prominent characteristic through all the makeup.

In fact, the makeup happens to be one of the most transitory aspects of the project. According to makeup artist James Cummins who worked on nearly half of the years-old project, the Drac design has gone through eight different evolutionary stages. Apparently, the designs changed every time someone new entered the production.

"It's hard to talk about this movie because there are so many different versions," said Cummins. "We thought in terms of *ENEMY MINE 1* and *ENEMY MINE 2* to coincide with each director. With Richard Loncraine [the first director], the Drac designs started out thin, elegant, very Egyptian-looking. The head was conical-shaped with throbbing membranes down the side. After it was approved and the designs completed, they decided to change it for some reason, making the head more streamlined."

Cummins was originally hired for the film by chief makeup artists Chris Walas and Canadian Stephan Dupuis, the team responsible for the makeup effects on *STRANGE INVADERS*. "I flew

to San Rafael and worked for three months," said Cummins. "I sculpted some of the baby and kid Dracs from head to foot. I also sculpted a lot of background Dracs. I tried to give them character traits: a fat Drac, a skinny Drac, an old Drac. Then the whole project kind of collapsed."

When Loncraine left the production 20th Century-Fox opted to throw out all of his design contributions and start again from scratch, after spending some \$9 million. Director Wolfgang Petersen was hired to replace Loncraine and Cummins was rehired by Walas and Dupuis to sculpt some Drac corpses. In the interim Cummins had worked on storyboard designs for *COCOON*.

"On *ENEMY MINE 2* I also provided some creative input on spacesuits," said Cummins. "Most of the designs were already established by Walas and Dupuis. The Drac concept had to be consistently altered. It eventually became a pretty depressing show to work on since the work you did was so often scrapped."

According to Cummins, Wolfgang Petersen just couldn't seem to make up his mind about what he wanted: "Walas went through tons of designs—actually sculpting and molding them—then being told 'No, we don't want them... do it again.' It was nerve-wracking and frustrating."

Walas sought advice from a number of people. Even Steven Spielberg had his hand in the production for a while. "The designs got sillier and sillier," said Cummins. "There was one point where the head was to have a hood which opened in the back like a car hood. Inside were going to be luminescent lights. I think that was Spielberg's contribution."

"The Drac finally ended up looking very monstrous," continued Cummins. "It lost the sleek, intelligent, elegant look completely. I think the design they ended up with is clumsy and awkward. They should have left it alone. It doesn't look very intelli-



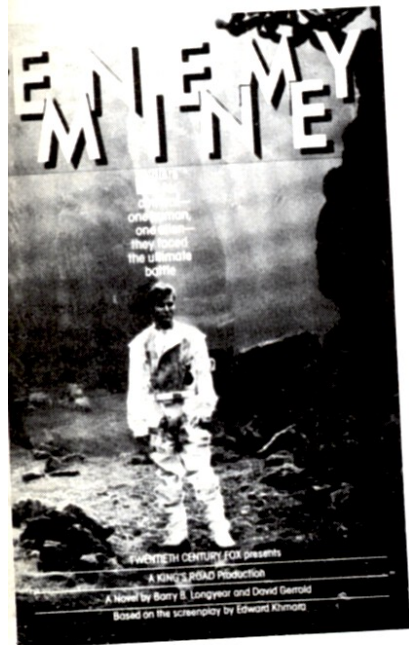
Wolfgang Petersen, the director who replaced Loncraine on *ENEMY MINE*, and scrapped \$9 million already spent.

gent. It looks more reptilian and dinosaur-like, with spikes... like a big, ugly hornytoad."

Other creatures on the planet include long sandworms called Predators which live beneath the surface. Cummins described them as big and hairy with many legs and massive jaws... "resembling the caterpillar creatures in *MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD*."

Filming took place on location in Lanzarote in the Spanish Canaries. "On *ENEMY MINE 1* they initially shot scenes in Iceland, using hot springs and the volcanic look of the island," said Cummins. "Then with Petersen, the project became more fanciful, shot mostly on the computerized stages of Bavaria Studios in Munich [where he shot *THE NEVERENDING STORY*]." Stage 9, Europe's largest, housed sets of the twin sun, six-moon volcanic planet Fyrine IV, complete with creeping glaciers, gargantuan petrified forests and lurking Predators.

"Petersen went for more of a fairy tale look and removed some of the hard-edged brutality of the planet that was Loncraine's," said Cummins. "From what I heard, no one can understand why Fox let him go since the dailies supposedly looked great." □





# A Nightmare

## ON ELM STREET—PART II

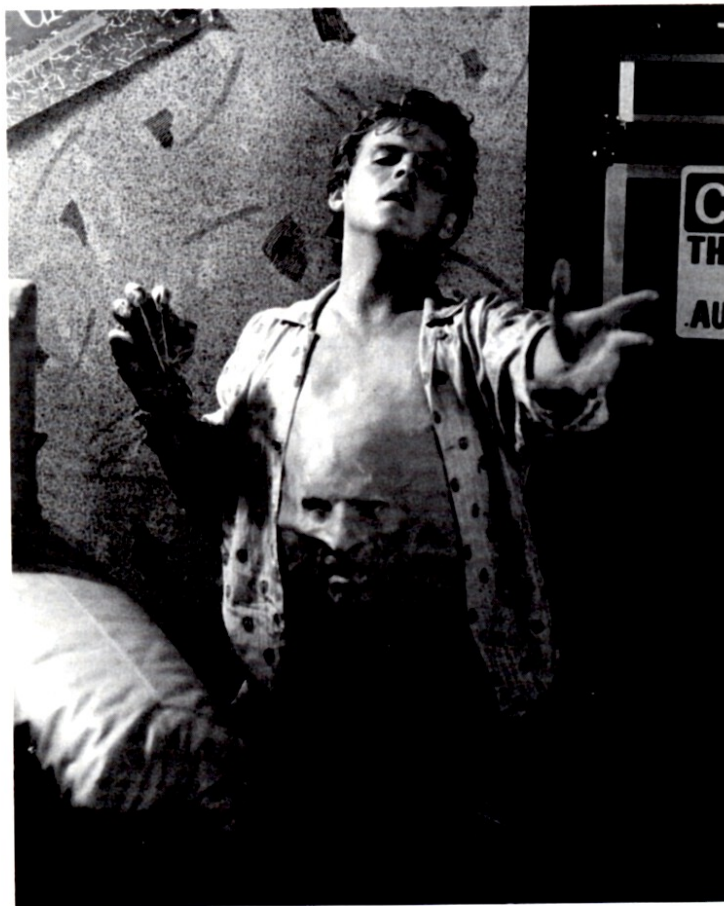
*Child molester Freddie Krueger comes back from the grave—again—to haunt the teenagers of main-street America.*

by Jim Clark

One of the most inventive, horrific, and fun genre films of 1984 was Wes Craven's *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* (15:3:40). That film, made on a shoe-string budget of under \$2 million (it looks like it cost four times that amount), has already grossed over \$24 million theatrically and immediately went platinum in its videocassette release. And it's attracted an enormous following of fans, from "Freddie Krueger Clones," who dress up as the film's popular monster and frequent midnight screenings of the film, to more than a few fascinated, and occasionally repulsed, academicians studying film and popular culture.

Now, a year later, comes the highly-anticipated sequel, *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II*, released by New Line Cinema November 1 on the East Coast and in January on the West Coast. The action is set five years after the terrifying events of the first film. That lovely two-story house down on Elm Street looks well cared for, despite the heavy bars which still cover its windows, but it's deserted. A new family, the Walshes, have just moved in, and the son, 17 year-old Jesse (played by Mark Patton, who starred in both the stage and screen versions of Robert Altman's *COME BACK TO THE FIVE AND DIME*, *JIMMY DEAN*, *JIMMY DEAN*), is beginning to have some very bad dreams.

For anyone familiar with the first film, you know that bad dreams on Elm Street have a demonic twist: they can become real—and deadly. At the center of these nightmares is the hideous, evil, yet strangely playful and captivating, figure of Freddie Krueger (Robert Englund, best known for his role as Willie, the good alien, in



Mark Patton plays a teenager possessed by Freddie Krueger, who emerges from the boy's body in a startling makeup effects sequence supervised by Mark Shostrom.

the television series *V*, here reprising his role from the original film.) While the first picture was a tale of Freddie's revenge, *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II* is a possession story.

Jesse at first knows nothing about Freddie. He and his family (his parents are played by veteran actors Clu Gulager, most recently seen in *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*, and Hope Lange, who had more favorable relations with the supernatural in her televi-

sion series, *THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR*) only know that everything in the new home is literally steaming up. The temperature is somewhere over 100 degrees all the time—a swimming pool starts to boil, and a radio melts.

For the new *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET*, only four key people from the first film are back: producer Robert Shaye and coproducer Sara Risher of New Line Cinema (which released the original picture as well as, among oth-

ers, *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*), cinematographer Jacques Haitkin, and Freddie Krueger himself, actor Robert Englund. (In fact, Mark Shostrom, who assisted Dave Miller in executing the striking makeup for the first film, returns also, to provide a special makeup effects sequence.)

The infusion of new creative blood was intentional. As co-line producer Michael Murphy noted, "*A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II* is not just a sequel. It has its own identity. We tried to steer clear of the first film in as many ways as we could." (Murphy, with his partner Joel Soisson, has two other pictures being released this year: *THE BOYS NEXT DOOR*, which they produced, and *THE SUPERNATURALS*, which they both wrote and produced.)

Jack Sholder is directing the further mayhem caused by Freddie Krueger in *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II*. Sholder is a man with a diverse range of credits: he wrote and directed an earlier horror film, *ALONE IN THE DARK*, edited the Oscar nominated documentary, *KING: FROM MONTGOMERY TO MEMPHIS*, won an Emmy for editing *3-2-1 CONTACT*, and, most recently, completed writing the screenplay for Ray Stark's upcoming film of the popular thriller, *WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN*.

Sholder had a definite idea where to take *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II*. In brief, "We're going for the *ahh*, rather than the *ugh*—to amaze, shock, and scare, but not to disgust," he said. Although the director confesses to not being a big fan of horror films, he has a great deal of respect for the people who enjoy such pictures. "They are one of the

continued on page 55





Actor Robert Englund as Freddie Krueger  
In makeup redesigned by Kevin Yagher.  
Englund (inset) is a marked contrast to his  
on-screen persona, and was featured regularly on  
the TV series V, as Willie, the friendly alien.





# Santa Claus

## THE MOVIE

*It cost \$50 million, but already it's made a profit, according to producer Ilya Salkind.*

by C.V. Drake

The challenge of producing a viable \$50 million Santa Claus movie was taken on by Ilya Salkind and Pierre Spengler, previously teamed on the successful *THREE MUSKETEERS* and *SUPERMAN* series. According to Salkind, *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE* is the most presold independent film in history.

"As we speak the film is in profit," said Salkind in September, two months prior to the film's November 27th premiere. "For a \$50 million movie to achieve that isn't bad. It is no secret that we made no money at all off the *SUPERMAN* series. [The Salkinds sold their film rights to Cannon Films earlier this year.] It was a catastrophe! We have spent these last years from 1979 just paying back what the first two films of the series cost. *SANTA CLAUS* is the first movie we have done without the enormous pressure of the banks behind us."

To direct the film Salkind and Spengler selected Jeannot Szwarc, who helmed *SUPERGIRL* for them. Szwarc lives high atop Laurel Canyon in Los Angeles, sharing a house full of art, music and old movies with his wife Kara. The Szwarc are at present expecting their first child.

"All my life I've wanted to make an absolutely pure classical fairy tale," said Szwarc, whose career was profiled in a previous issue, Volume 10 Number 4. "I see *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE* as the chance to touch the child in every human being."

Szwarc feels a responsibility on the film to generations of children. "It's a petrifying challenge," he said. "We are dealing with an element of fantasy that is very difficult to convey. We have to find a balance between the North Pole of Santa and the Elves, and the world



John Lithgow as toy Tycoon B.Z. and David Huddleston as Santa Claus.

of today. That's not easy."

Szwarc, who directed the lyrical time travel fantasy *SOMEWHERE IN TIME* (1980), has a passion for putting romanticism back into the movies. "Everybody's so afraid of sentimentality today," he said. "I really had a clear vision of this film from the beginning, which was unusual. I felt it had to have what the French call *enchantment*—what Cocteau used to call the poetic content of images. It can never be slick, it can never be cyni-

cal. So many things nowadays don't have that poetic feel. If you don't have that sincerity, a film like this won't work. And the audience can sense that immediately."

Besides Cocteau, Szwarc referred to Frank Capra's magical *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* for the feeling he wanted to evoke. "When I started researching, I found that very little is really known about Santa Claus," said Szwarc. "Everybody knows he's dressed in red, that he comes down

chimneys and gives out toys, but not much is known about what kind of person he is. There's a part in the film where he gets very depressed... another time he gets very angry, and sometimes he is sad. We made him a complete human being."

When Szwarc signed on to direct *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE*, the producers had already signed Dudley Moore to play Santa's chief elf, and David Newman had written a first draft of the screenplay. Newman, co-author of *BONNIE AND CLYDE*, had worked on the *SUPERMAN* series. A New Yorker with a Masters degree in English Literature from the University of Michigan, Newman works closely with his wife Leslie, with whom he wrote the original story for *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE*.

After reading Newman's first draft Szwarc met with the writer for three weeks of extensive discussions about the film. "We were absolutely sure that it had to be a fairy tale," said Szwarc. "We wanted it to be like *SNOW WHITE* and *BAMBI*—Walt Disney in the '40s—but without the animation. It had to have that kind of humor, that kind of feeling, and that kind of magic."

Szwarc likened working on the script to regressing to childhood. "I just tapped my subconscious," he said. "I had a lot of ideas about the elves and I don't know where they came from. To explain what makes the reindeer fly we came up with the idea that the elves give them food that has stardust in it."

The film is divided roughly into two halves. The first tells the story of the myth, about how Santa Claus, an old wood cutter, meets the elves and is given immortality and his Christmas mission. The second half of the picture takes place in the 20th Century, and is the story of what today's values have done to Christmas. It depicts





The animatronic second unit films Huddleston and mechanized reindeer for the film's flying scenes. Tri-Star opens **SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE** nationwide November 27.

the conflict between Santa and a materialistic toymaker played by John Lithgow, who's out to take over Christmas.

The filmmakers found their perfect Santa Claus—David Huddleston—on Broadway, starring opposite Dustin Hoffman in a standing room only revival of *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*. Huddleston comes from a non-acting family in Vinton, Virginia—the rural South—via the American Academy of Dramatic Art, and has become a much sought after character actor. In addition to an active stage career, Huddleston has appeared in 36

feature films, including his role as the sinister congressman in Peter Hyams' *CAPRICORN ONE*.

Dudley Moore brought name value to the production—akin to the Salkind's signing of Marlon Brando for *SUPERMAN*—after a string of romantic-comedy box-office hits. "Dudley was a bit nervous," said Szwarc about Moore's elf role. "It was his first picture without a lady. It was outside of his persona. After he got used to being surrounded by all those elves he began to have a wonderful time."

John Lithgow's name came up immediately in connection with

Santa's nemesis, the villainous B.Z. Lithgow describes the character as a "venal, arrogant, greedy monster. Basically he's everything Santa Claus is not! He's in love with himself and making money. Almost a fairy tale villain in the great tradition of Captain Hook and the Big Bad Wolf, so he's got to be tremendously engaging."

Lithgow comes to the role on top of his scene-stealing villain in *BUCKEROO BANZAI*. "I think people come looking for me when they are casting a heavy because there is a good deal of acting involved. And, I bring a good deal of acting to it," he said, erupting into a typical B.Z. laugh. "Probably too much!"

Szwarc emphasized that B.Z. is firmly grounded in reality and is not as off-the-wall as Lithgow's schizophrenic performance in *BUCKEROO BANZAI*. "B.Z. is theatrical," said Szwarc. "What we're really dealing with in the character is a loss of innocence. I told Lithgow, 'Don't be afraid to go over the top.' He said, 'My God, Jeannot, I'm the wrong person to tell that to.' I told him, 'Don't worry, if you go too far, I'll bring you down.' I put him in a very conservative business suit. We wanted to say that this obsession with materialism is eventually going to destroy all of us. It is done

subtly in the film—nothing is preachy. I told John, 'Just have fun with it.'"

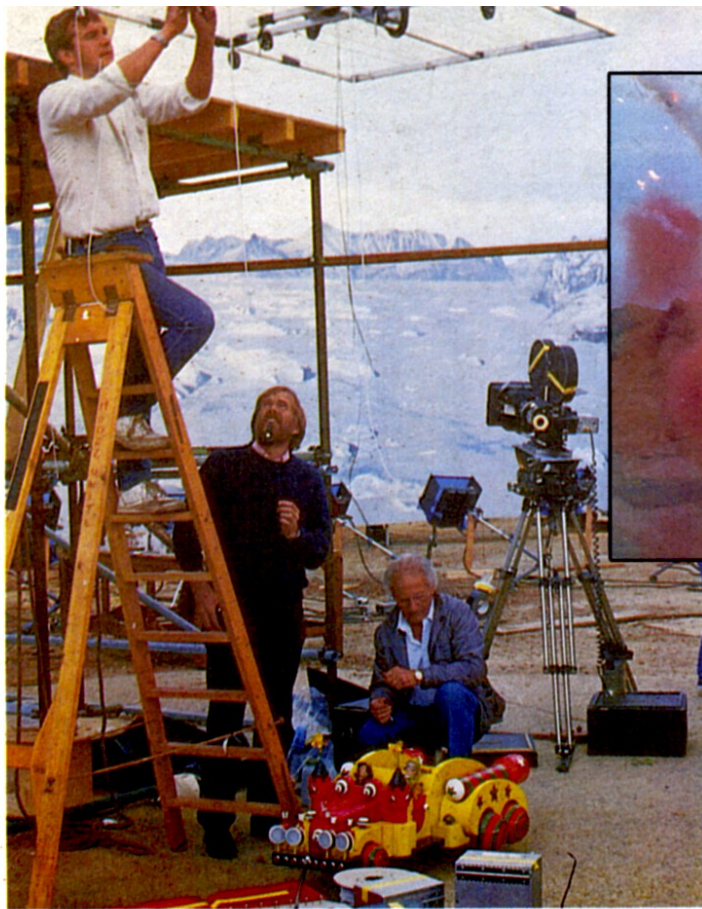
Szwarc also enjoyed working with Burgess Meredith, who plays an ancient elf. "The first show I ever directed was an *IRONSIDE* and he was in it," said Szwarc. "And then I did a couple of *NIGHT GALLERY*'s with him. When I started rehearsing him for the role, it was uncanny because of his childlike face and the way he suddenly took over the part—he *became* the part. I only had him three days, for one major scene. We blocked all his stuff in a very short time, and he had a lot of dialogue. Despite his jet lag he was marvelous."

Most of the difficulties during pre-production were caused by the production's need for reindeer, an integral part of the story. A team of trainers from the United States went to Norway and bought twenty reindeer, saving them from the slaughterhouse—according to Szwarc, reindeer are the Lapp's equivalent of cattle—making up two teams of eight, for scenes where they pull Santa's sleigh, with four spares. The trainers began working with the animals on the Pinewood Studios Estate in England. Reindeer only possess antlers for part of the year—once the velvet covered antlers have

Jeannot Szwarc (left) directs Dudley Moore (center) as Patch, Santa's chief elf.







Miniature effects supervisor Derek Meddings (kneeling) during rigging of a model Patchmobile for the film's climactic chase sequence where the car explodes (inset). Note that the artic backdrop was filmed outdoors on the Pinewood lot using real sky and clouds.



I used animatronics. We had reindeer heads which had the individual characteristics of each animal. For example, Donner hates to fly. He gets vertigo. So he uses one of his ears to block his eyes. The preview audiences loved it."

Szwarc found the schedule of the mammoth production a bit daunting. "I was on the picture a total of a year and nine months," he said. "I had five units. There was a main unit, a second unit which was also a flying unit, an optical unit, a model unit, and an electronic unit—and I was supervising all of them. The main unit took about seventeen weeks—I started shooting August 16th, 1983, and finished just before Christmas. I finished the opticals and models by the following May." Szwarc depended on extensive storyboarding to communicate the visual task at hand to the various units and their crews.

"I really like to communicate with my crew on a conceptual level," said Szwarc. "I believe that if I get sick, they should be able to

Ancient elf Burgess Meredith bestows Santa Claus with immortality and a mission.



grown, their coats change from a summer coat to a winter coat—"Then," said Szwarc, "you have about two-and-a-half months—after that the velvet falls off, and the antlers fall off."

Continuity was not the only difficulty. "Reindeer are not really domesticated animals," said Szwarc. "Even the Lapps only use one reindeer at a time to pull anything. It took the trainers six months just to train a team of eight reindeer to be on the set and not to be afraid." The first time Szwarc was on the set with the reindeer, he waved his hand "and

the reindeer jumped ten feet. I turned to head trainer David McMillan and said, 'Jesus! I've got a scene with three hundred elves. They're going to scream and throw their hats, and the crew has lights!'"

While McMillan was making actors out of the live reindeer, visual and miniature effects director Derek Meddings and art director Malcolm Stone were taking another approach to the reindeer problem. Their animatronic crew (some of whom had previously worked with Jim Henson) built four life-sized, computer controlled reindeer, using actual hides in the construction. Szwarc denied rumors circulating in London that reindeer were slaughtered for this purpose stating the hides were purchased from the Lapps in Norway where deer are routinely slaughtered for food.

"The animatronics crew literally made complete skeletons, with muscle structure, and everything," said Szwarc. "It was extraordinary. I spent a lot of time figuring out exactly where and when to go from real reindeer to models or animatronics.

"I also spent a lot of time on characterization—giving each reindeer an individual personality," continued Szwarc. "Real reindeer have very little facial expression. They are adorable, wonderful animals, but they don't have a very expressive face. Whenever the reindeer face a psychological or emotional situation,

Derek Meddings rigs a model of the Patchmobile on a miniature New York City set built at Pinewood Studios.





# Santa Claus

## AT THE MOVIES

*The jolly fat man in the bright red suit has often been the subject of screen fantasies, from silents to cartoons to sexploitation.*

By C.V. Drake

Santa Claus (alias Kris Kringle, Father Christmas, St. Nicholas, Saint Nick, Pere Noel, Grandfather Frost, etc.) has been a perennial favorite in motion pictures. In a world constantly besieged by war, crime and disease, it is not surprising that the Santa Claus legend has persisted on the screen with its magical message of hope, love, and selfless devotion.

There have been countless films in which people have impersonated Santa Claus, some with a cynical, darker tone. For example, a man dressed as Santa is attacked in *GREMLINS*, and a killer disguises himself as Santa Claus in *SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT* (1984), a film that stirred controversy last Christmas and ironically came from the same distributor as this season's *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE*. Of interest here are only those films that depict the Santa Claus myth.

Santa Claus shorts are among the earliest films ever made, and too numerous to list completely. In 1898 England, George A. Smith made the first, a 75-foot long trick film called *SANTA CLAUS*, also known as *THE VISIT OF SANTA CLAUS*, in which children dream Santa comes down the chimney.

In 1900, George Melies, the French pioneer of *cinéfantastique*, made *REVE DE NOEL* (called



Santa (Edmund Gwenn) comforts Natalie Wood in *MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* (1947), considered by many to be the best Santa Claus picture ever made.

*THE CHRISTMAS DREAM* in the U.S.). It was 520 feet and included twenty scenes with Pere Noel.

In 1905, Edwin S. Porter combined live-action with animated miniatures to create an 800-foot version of Clement Clarke Moore's popular poem, "A Visit From St. Nicholas." The film was called *THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS* and shows Santa at the North Pole. By means of table-top trick photography Santa flies through the air in his magic sleigh, landing and taking off from rooftops.

Santa was often the province of low-budget filmmakers. The bizarre *SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS* (1964) featured Pia Zadora (3rd from left).



In the 1912 British *SANTA CLAUS*, made in a limited color process, a girl dreams she visits toyland and helps Santa, who is played by Leedham Bantock. The 1914 Edison film *TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS* (directed by Ashly Miller) showed Santa Claus and his gnomes' workshop. It was based on a scenario by Annie Hamilton Donnell. In 1926 George Cooper directed a British *SANTA CLAUS*, a Christmas play that was filmed using an early sound system.

From the 20's to the present, dozens of animated cartoons featured Santa Claus and provided some of the best visualizations of the fantastic elements of the Santa Claus legend—especially *SANTA'S WORKSHOP* (1932) and *THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS* (1933), both made by Walt Disney. No attempt is made to list all animated Santa Claus films.

In *BABES IN TOYLAND* (1934—before the Disney version), Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy mistake an order from Santa Claus (Ferdinand Munier) for 600 one-foot soldiers to be an order for 100 six-foot soldiers. Later the soldiers save Toyland from an attack by Bogeymen, all to the tune of Victor Herbert's "March of the Toys."

In *ROAD TO UTOPIA* (1946), Bing Crosby and Bob Hope tell Santa Claus they don't believe in

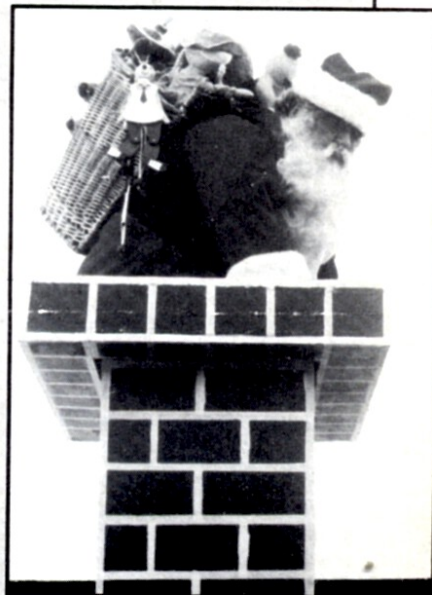
him. "You'll be sorry," Santa replies and produces two beautiful young women from his bag.

*MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* (1947) is considered to be the best Santa Claus film ever made. Written and directed by George Seaton, it featured Edmund Gwenn as a kindly old man who called himself "Kris Kringle" and listed eight reindeer as his "next of kin." A subtly ambiguous ending leaves the question of whether Gwenn is really Santa Claus open to audience interpretation. Gwenn received an Academy Award for his performance in the picture. The cast also included Maureen O'Hara, John Payne, and a young Natalie Wood.

*RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*, a cartoon by Max Fleischer, based on the Johnny Marks song and a story by Robert L. May, appeared in 1948. Another *RUDOLPH* cartoon was made in the same period using the Gene Autry recording of the song on the soundtrack. Since Rudolph is a copyrighted character, no mention is made of him in *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE*.

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Armand Meffre in *HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS*, a French production released last year by New World.





# Amazing

Steven Spielberg convenes a satellite press conference to

By Bill Kelley

During the course of a satellite-beamed interview for AMAZING STORIES, with dozens of questions asked in less than 90 minutes, Steven Spielberg said so many things in rapid-fire style that it's impossible to find a central theme for the filmmaker's lone interview about his new NBC series.

But, among the interview's highlights were:

- Three scary episodes, including director Peter Hyams' "The Amazing Fallsworth," have been deemed by Spielberg too "intense, and not for little kids—though they'd get no more than a PG-13," for the series' 8 p.m. Sunday time slot, and will run later at night.

- Spielberg firmly denied reports that no AMAZING STORIES episodes will be pre-screened for critics, saying that the first two shows were being held back "because my main anxiety is having shows written about in newspapers before they have a chance to air. I don't want to get anybody steamed about this; I just want the first two weeks to get going." Referring to the no-screening policy that often applies to his movies as well, he quipped, "You know me. I always like to wait till the last minute."

- Spielberg also denied reports that he would not even allow NBC to hype the episodes each week with clips, and stated, "All along, we've said, 'we gotta promote this, we've gotta promote this.'"

- Admitting the mammoth syndication profits of a hit series were "an inducement" to do AMAZING STORIES, Spielberg denied they were the only reason. "If that were my only motive, I'd do something less risky, I wouldn't do an anthology series, because they haven't been successful recently," he said. "There are other formats, safe areas, that could have made a faster hit." He cited the Aaron Spelling-type of program (THE LOVE BOAT, DYNASTY) as examples of hit formula shows.

- Asked if AMAZING STORIES gives him potentially greater

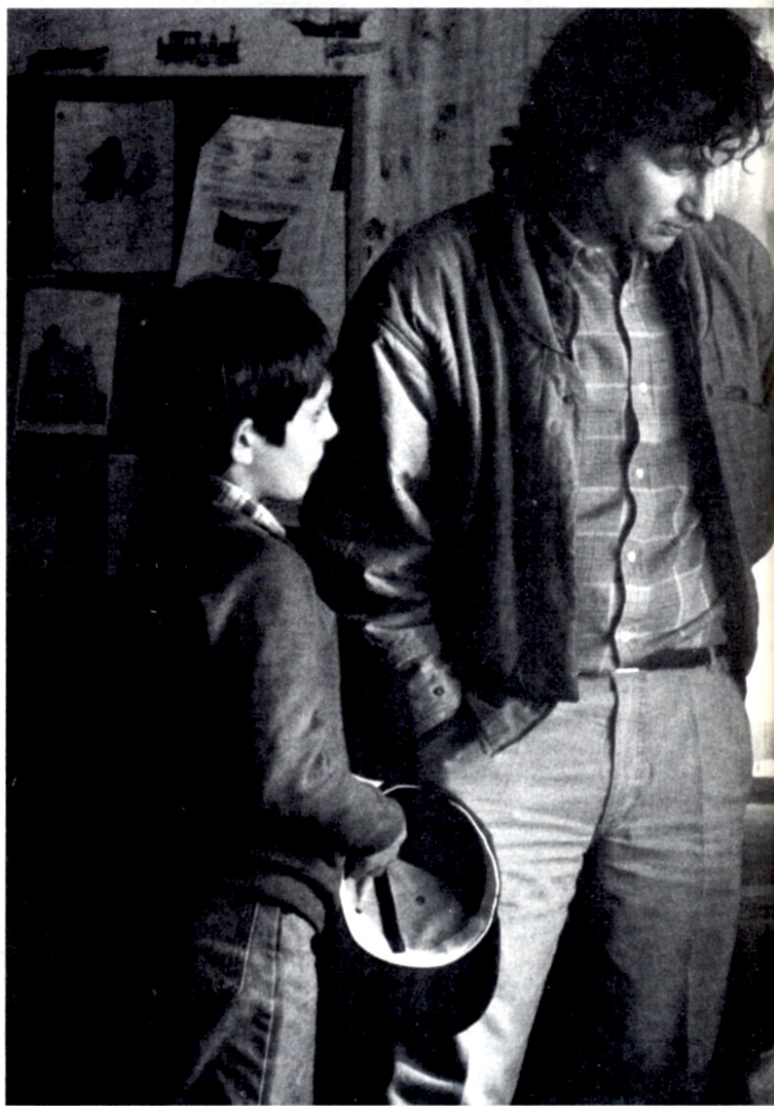
artistic freedom than his feature films, which are increasingly tailored to mass tastes—a trap Walt Disney also found himself in eventually—Spielberg said, "Yes, some episodes might even be considered art films. I'd like to think Walt Disney would like my movies . . . but some of these [AMAZING STORIES episodes] are even avant garde."

- Spielberg loves the frantic pace of television (he provided, as series developer, concepts for 16 of the first season's 22 shows), even though it requires shooting 23 minutes of film in five to six days (a day longer than most half-hour series), and said he thinks its influence on him will be "I'll work faster now [on movies]. We shot JAWS in seven months, and I lost interest in the shark and water after three months."

NBC's unprecedented, two-year, 44-episode commitment was "my ground rule," said Spielberg, who talked to TV journalists from his expansive Amblin Entertainment headquarters at Universal City. The Spanish style office complex, built by Universal at a cost of \$3.1 million, includes a mockup of a 1940's candy store ("It brings back fond memories," said Spielberg) and a New York-style deli which serves up lunch for Amblin employees and guests.

"I didn't want to do the series unless I had a second year to get to," he said. "If the show doesn't work, we'll have the second year to try and get it better. I was introduced to [NBC execs] Grant Tinker and Brandon Tartikoff by Gary Goldberg [FAMILY TIES' producer], who's a friend of mine, and they lived up to everything they promised. I make films on a rapport rather than a deal basis."

Spielberg also said that after the September 29 premiere, NBC has limited promotional use of his name as developer and executive producer of the series. "I'm not going to chase ratings by telling people to please watch, and NBC can't use my name as much as they would like to. I want the show to sell itself. Who can predict? I don't



Spielberg directs Lukas Haas (left) and Roberts Blossom in AMAZING STORIES.

think anybody could have guessed MIAMI VICE would have had such broad popularity."

The series' premiere September 29th failed to win its time period in the Nielsen ratings, bested by sleuth series MURDER, SHE WROTE on CBS. (MURDER, SHE WROTE ranked among the week's top ten shows at number 6, while AMAZING STORIES held the number 12 spot.) But Spielberg professed little concern about AMAZING STORIES' initial rat-

ings saying that if it does not emerge as an instant smash, "better that than like CALL TO GLORY, start at the top and have nowhere to go but down." [The 1984/85 series about an Air Force family in the early '60s—starring POLTERGEIST's leading man Craig T. Nelson—soared to success on ABC following heavy promotion for the series during ABC's Olympic coverage, then quickly plummeted in the A.C. Nielsen ratings.]

Spielberg has so far directed two



# Spielberg

**hype his new NBC series and tells some amazing stories.**



"Ghost Train," the premiere episode, failed to win its time period in the ratings.

segments—the premiere, "Ghost Train" (in which his companion, Amy Irving, and her actress mother, Priscilla Pointer, appear as extras on the train), and a later episode "The Mission," which he expanded to an hour—and has hired some top feature directors for others. A third concept was quietly pulled from the production roster for expansion into a Spielberg-produced movie, to come out next summer. Characteristically, Spielberg gave no further details.

He said one-third of the episodes are directed by newcomers, such as Daniel Petrie Jr., and actor Bob Balaban (the scientist in Spielberg's CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, who directed an episode for George Romero's TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE). "It's a wonderful training ground for writers and directors. It's like a campus—a USC or UCLA," he observed.

"One of my jobs is to pair the right director with the right

script," said Spielberg, revealing that he offered three scripts to Burt Reynolds before the actor/director (who will not appear in his segment) selected "Method Actor." Each director casts his own episode, and NBC does not interfere with the casting ("There's no one saying you must put this actor on because he has a higher TV Q rating"). Spielberg said none of the episodes written so far are adaptations of published short stories (although the series shares its title with the long-running pulp magazine, *Amazing Stories*). And he added that viewers presumably only care who the director is "when it's Clint Eastwood or Burt Reynolds."

Some leading motion picture directors wanted to work on the first season, said Spielberg, but were unavailable, and he hopes to corral them for the second season. Among these: Peter Weir (WITNESS), whose schedule for MOSQUITO COAST (an adaptation of a Paul Theroux novel) was moved up. Spielberg joked that David Lean (A PASSAGE TO INDIA), who works as slowly as any filmmaker and who was tantalizingly glimpsed behind the scenes in an AMAZING STORIES promotional reel last spring, said, "Look—give me six months and I'll be happy to do a half-hour."

Spielberg singled out the grueling TV production pace as the true test of an AMAZING STORIES director's mettle. "I've heard some of our feature directors moan, 'Oh, I've got to get to the plot in three minutes, I want to tease,'" said Spielberg, chuckling. "They're not used to it. When you go to the movies, it's often 25 minutes before you see what you paid your \$5.50 for."

"It's an eclectic mix," Spielberg added, describing the blend of plot themes. "Some of the shows are scary, some are silly. It's like comparing apples and oranges. The shows really vary and you really have to sample a few of them. I hope a show like this can sustain without a running theme. There is not a host—John Newland doesn't

come out and introduce it, Hitchcock isn't there."

And neither is Rod Serling, whose TWILIGHT ZONE revival is another part of the anthology renaissance at the networks this season. Spielberg expressed affection for the old TWILIGHT ZONE—"I was a big fan of all those anthologies, as well as others, like THRILLER, PLAYHOUSE 90, SCIENCE FICTION THEATRE"—but he said, "The difference here is that THE TWILIGHT ZONE tended to moralize a bit, it was like chafing across the knuckles, even a bit cynical. To bring back the series I used to love, which are the half-hour and hour anthologies, that's the challenge."

In addition to revealing a surprising knowledge of the inner workings of the television industry ("I'm a TV junkie," he cheerfully admitted), Spielberg fondly recalled that, when he was under contract to Universal for such TV movies as DUEL and episodes of MARCUS WELBY, M.D. and NIGHT GALLERY, he would prowl the studio lot, watching other TV shows—particular anthology series, then in their last days—being shot. He readily admitted he has wanted to return to television for several years.

"I got my start in television in '69 or '70," he said. "I came out of television. I had a lot of fun. I've been so tempted to go back to television over the years, and I thought, 'I can't go back now—people will think it's a surrender.'"

Spielberg also defended the production budgets, which at \$800,000 to \$1 million per half-hour, are easily double the normal price for that amount of time on TV. "I don't know that the audience is expecting the mother ship to land every Sunday night," he said. "You're not going to be seeing a \$20 million movie each week. What you'll be seeing is a story that is amazing for television." And he said, over the long haul, each season's run is a bargain: "They're getting the entire season for less than the cost of a single theatrical film." □



# LEGEND

*The director of ALIEN and BLADE RUNNER talks about bringing his multi-million dollar epic fantasy to the screen.*

by Alan Jones

Although principal photography for the \$24.5 million production of LEGEND started at Pinewood Studios on March 26, 1984, for director Ridley Scott, one of the cinema's premier visual stylists, it was the culmination of almost four years of preparation. Between the completion of ALIEN and the start of BLADE RUNNER, Scott solidified plans to bring a fairy tale centering upon the eternal struggle between the powers of light and darkness to the screen.

Universal scheduled the film for release November 8, but scrapped those plans after unsatisfactory audience previews. Universal is tinkering with the film to make it more commercial—among other changes, replacing Jerry Goldsmith's lush symphonic score with electronic music—and plans to release the film sometime in 1986. LEGEND premiered in France in September and is scheduled to open in Britain and the rest of Europe in December through world distributor 20th Century-Fox.

The idea for a film like LEGEND was something Scott had toyed with while filming THE DUELLISTS in France seven years ago but at that point couldn't really make a clear cut decision about which route he wanted his directing career to take.

"One of the reasons I wanted to make LEGEND was because of my aborted project, TRISTAN AND ISOLDE," he said. "After THE DUELLISTS I couldn't see the point of spending another year of my life on what would essentially be another art movie that only a limited audience would see. For me it just wasn't enough—not in monetary terms but artistic ones. So I dropped the idea and did ALIEN instead. I was right to do that in retrospect.

"Then I prepared DUNE for a year," Scott continued. "All I saw with that project was another 2½ years stretching in front of me

**"I wanted to do a fairy tale or mythological story. I'm one of those people who find the real world of no particular interest."**



Above: Director Ridley Scott. Top Right: Mia Sara as Princess Lili and Tom Cruise as Jack. Bottom Left: As a ruse the Lord of Darkness shows Lili (Mia Sara) her true reflection in a magic mirror. Bottom Right: Annabelle Lanyon as winged fairy Oona.

before I even got behind the cameras. Filmmaking is actually going out and doing it and not spending 3 years in preproduction. But I always wanted to return to the mythological or fairy tale idea as I'm one of those people who find the real world of no particular interest."

To get inspiration and narrow the focus on what LEGEND should be about, Scott voraciously read all the established classic fairy-tales, such as the Brothers Grimm. Scott realized early on that the film would have to be an original screenplay. "I banned anything I considered too

sweet," he said. "It was far easier to design a story to fit the medium of cinema than bend the medium for an established story."

It was at this time that Scott chanced upon the books written by Montana-based American author William Hjortsberg. "I discovered Hjortsberg had already written screenplays for some unmade lower-budgeted films and we both seemed to share the same vision. I wanted something with a broad appeal. I didn't want to do anything overtly inaccessible which might have happened with a European writer. On our first meeting I ran Cocteau's BEAUTY

AND THE BEAST and based our working relationship on the fact that we were both wildly enthusiastic about it."

In January 1981, just prior to the principal shooting of BLADE RUNNER, Scott and Hjortsberg spent five weeks thrashing out a rough storyline which originally bore the title LEGEND OF DARKNESS. "Fifteen revisions later, we finally worked out what we both wanted," said Scott. "To begin with, I only had the vague notion of something in pursuit of the swiftest steed alive which, of course, was the unicorn. One aspect I was very definite about was that I wanted the outside world shown as economically as possible. To that end we settled on the solitary clockmaker's cottage. Originally the quests were more prolonged and involved the classic earning process but all these had to be substantially reduced.

"I was nervous about getting too complex in filmic terms," continued Scott. "Every quest story tends to have side quests that depart from the main thrust of the story in order to get a weapon or a super power. I wanted to give LEGEND a more contemporary movement, rather than get bogged down in too classical a format. With a budget of the scale we had, we had to look to a broader audience which just wouldn't tolerate that. Personally I love that approach, but apart from critics, most people don't."

For the look of LEGEND, Scott was influenced by the style of Disney animation and originally offered the project to the studio. "When we were trying to sell the project it was very dark in tone," said Scott. "I tend to lean in that direction, anyway. The fear of distributors at that time was extraordinary. When we submitted it to Disney I tried to reassure them that my intention was not to go too far in that direction, but they couldn't seem to understand such a change of pace, considering my









Tom Cruise as heroic warrior Jack.

previous work.

"I could have taken this same script and gone two ways," Scott continued. "One would have been dark and Celtic which would have limited it. The other was the Disney route and as I made LEGEND primarily for children, my children to be precise, that's the avenue I pursued. Having visual references to SNOW WHITE, FANTASIA and especially PINOCCHIO were clear cut decisions by me. This visual interest was necessary to carry the basic simplistic story."

Prior to Scott securing the services of production designer Assheton Gorton, artist Alan Lea worked on LEGEND as the initial visual consultant. Arthur Rackham and Heath Robinson's art also influenced the look of the film. "Lea drew some characters and sketched environments," said Scott. "But then I managed to get

Gorton, whom I wanted for both ALIEN and BLADE RUNNER. Because I'd spent 7 years at art school I was able to have some pretty dynamic conversations with Gorton. We would literally sketch at each other.

"One of the big fears of LEGEND being a totally stage bound film was striving for a believable reality," continued Scott. "I didn't want anyone to think they were watching anything phony. Gorton is sophisticated in this area because he knows all the pitfalls of shooting exteriors on a soundstage. We both knew that whatever we did would never look absolutely real, but would very quickly gain its own reality and dispense with any feeling of theatricality."

**S**cott employed every conceivable device known to him from his commercials career in order to make LEGEND's atmosphere come alive. "The flurries of dandelion seeds used for atmosphere in many sequences were in fact loads of duck down being flung into lots of wind fans," he said. "When a huge blob went past the camera looking obviously like feathers, I yelled cut. It's a method I've used for years."

Preproduction on LEGEND included input from effects expert Richard Edlund whose involvement came about because Scott didn't want to be limited in the major character roles to the number of smaller people who could be found who could actually act. "At one stage I wanted Mickey Rooney to play one of the characters but at 5'2" next to 5'8" Tom Cruise he didn't look that tiny," said Scott. "Edlund came up with a method of shooting everything on 70mm and taking that negative and shrinking the actors to any size we wanted to make the illusion more realistic. The budget for this



Meg Mucklebones (Robert Picardo), the flesh-eating zombie servant of Darkness.

alone was enormous and affected everything so I had to axe it and take the gamble on finding an ensemble of good, small actors."

Scott had no preconceived ideas of who he actually wanted to star in LEGEND but, in his own words, he wanted people he hadn't seen before. "I had just seen THE TIN DRUM and found myself wondering if the star, David Bennent, had grown," said Scott. "Well he had, but not that much! For Princess Lili and Jack O' the Green, I wanted two characters who had to personify innocence." Scott chose Mia Sara as Lili, a sixteen year-old New Yorker, who makes her film debut in LEGEND. For Jack, Scott chose Tom Cruise, star of hit teen movies like RISKY BUSINESS and ALL THE RIGHT MOVES.

For the pivotal role of Darkness, Scott had the inspired idea of casting Tim Curry, Dr. Frank N' Furter himself from THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW. "What's so great about Curry as Darkness is, although I could see him internally panicking that there was nothing left of him, visually speaking, under Rob Bot-

tin's makeup, his personality is stamped on the role in the deftest way," said Scott. "I wanted exactly that controlled sense of theatricality."

All the principal players apart from Cruise and Sara spent hours in the makeup room every morning under the watchful eye of Bottin and his team of experts led by Peter Robb-King. Each person needed three makeup artists working on them, which is why Bottin's original menagerie of characters was honed-down to the minimum due to the expense. Scott saw the makeup as the actors' problem, not his. "They were all very tired before they even got to the soundstage," he said. "But once they all saw how good they looked, it pumped up their adrenalin and they tended to forget the whole boring process—until the next day of course!"

"The average actor was in makeup for 3½ hours," Scott continued. "Tim Curry started out at 8 hours and got it down to 5½. Enclosing Curry's body totally in makeup meant that he had to be more than patient in getting it off. He had to sit in a bath for an hour to liquefy the soluble spirit gum. Unfortunately he got impatient and claustrophobic and too hurriedly pulled it off which meant he tore his skin off as well. We had to shoot around him for a week to calm him down."

According to Scott, the larger the production got, the less money he seemed to have, a feeling not helped by the fact that 16 weeks into production, and with 10 days left on the large 007 stage at Pinewood, the entire set burned down. "I had started the snow scenes but still needed to get more shots," recalled Scott. "During the lunch break the fire broke out and all I could say was 'shit.' I hurried back to my office and set about re-juggling the schedule to get quickly onto another stage. I only lost 3 days in total by simply escalating the building on one of the other

David Bennent, diminutive star of THE TIN DRUM, as Gump, leader of the elves, cradling Oona, a Tinkerbell-like fairy.





# LEGEND MAKEUP

**Rob Bottin on shaping the weird, wonderful look of Ridley Scott's large cast of fantasy characters.**

by Steve  
Biodrowski

Rob Bottin first heard about LEGEND shortly after THE HOWLING, when Ridley Scott contacted him about working on BLADE RUNNER. "I had already committed myself to THE THING," said



Rob Bottin

Most movies do not involve full body prosthetics, or use them only in specific scenes. Not LEGEND!"

Bottin is quick to point out that this was no one-man job: "From a technical standpoint, the greatest challenge was the elaborate nature of the makeup like

some weird Las Vegas show from Hell. LEGEND probably had the largest makeup crew ever dedicated to one project. Our facility was divided into different shops to cover the massive workload: sculpting, mold-making, foam rubber, cosmetics."

As actors were cast, Bottin and his crew began doing life casts and designing characters on drafting paper laid over sketches of the actors' faces. Scott, a talented artist himself, was a big influence on the look of all the designs. "For example, Alice Playten felt her character should look like Keith Richard of The Rolling Stones. Ridley did a quick sketch of Richard as a goblin, and we used that as a starting point."

The next step was transforming the designs into three dimensions.

Bottin. "Ridley said he had another project—a mythical fairy tale. Toward the end of THE THING I received a script for LEGEND OF DARKNESS. I thought it was terrific—a chance to create characters in starring roles, like the ones in WIZARD OF OZ. Also, I knew Ridley would insist the makeups look great photographically—he has a reputation for being the Rembrandt of filmmaking."

After THE THING, Bottin and Scott sat down to reduce the creatures to a workable number, since the first script suggested thousands. "A lot of side characters and fantasy creatures were removed because the principal characters involved complicated prosthetic makeups that would have to be worn up to sixty shooting days.



Peter O'Farrell as Pox, a goblin. The makeup is a combination of a prosthetic face mask and a polyurethane suit with a spandex covering and ventilated hair.

"The most difficult job on the picture was sculpting. When you start laying clay on a life-mask, you realize, 'We can't do this—the actor's nose is in the way.'"

Bottin collaborated closely with lead special makeup artist Vince Prentice, sculptural designer Henry Alvarez, staff shop supervisor Ralph Cobos, and mold-maker Art Pimental on working out the final look of the characters. "Alvarez and I would get the look we wanted. Then Pimental would say to us, 'Let's thin it out here or this guy won't have much facial movement.' Then Cobos would add, 'That's good, but you can't mold it without a seam across the face.' So we'd keep working on it, trying to make the necessary

changes without destroying the look of the creature."

Sculptor Lauren Marems helped out on designs for Brown Tom O'Kirkdale and Screwball. "She came into play when we were trying to find the definitive amount of cuteness," said Bottin. "I'm not known for loveable creatures; Darkness was much easier for me to design."

Once sculptures were finished, the makeups were divided into separate pieces—brow, cheek, nose, etc.—to make application easier and give more movement and flexibility. Then molds were made to create these various pieces in foam rubber. Because the process of using solvents to remove prosthetics from an actor's skin destroys the pieces, a new set must be created for each day of shooting; if the makeup is divided into ten pieces (as it was for Darkness) and there are sixty shooting days, that means six hundred pieces. In order to manufacture that many in time to meet the production schedule more than one mold per piece was used.

"We needed up to eight molds per piece. The two large ovens I've used during my career wouldn't handle the workload, so we had an oven built the size of a garage. Makeup technicians, led by John Goodwin, literally had to drive the gigantic molds in and out of the oven on massive carts. The workload got so heavy we started a second shift that would do the

continued on next page

Alice Playten as goblin Blix. Playten (inset) labored under a costume designed by Charles Knode to hide her femininity.





**“LEGEND was the chance to create characters in starring roles, like the ones in THE WIZARD OF OZ. I knew director Ridley Scott would insist the makeups look great photographically—he’s the Rembrandt of filmmaking.”**

foam runs at night after the day shift’s foam runs had cooled down.”

After being removed from the molds, the rubber appliances were mounted on head and chest casts and sent to the cosmetic department, where seams would be removed, paint applied, and hair punched in. For example, each hair of Pox the Pig’s beard was inserted individually.

Nick Dudman, who did the Emperor’s makeup in RETURN OF THE JEDI, set up a lab in England to create characters developed there by Ridley Scott; the lab also serviced Bottin’s incoming prosthetics from America. Peter Robb-King put together a crew of England’s best prosthetic experts to apply the makeup onto the actors daily. The first characters to go before the camera were the goblins Blix and Pox.

Because a full-sized body prosthetic with inserted hair would have been impractical, Pox combines a face makeup and a polyurethane suit with a spandex covering and ventilated hair. The face prosthetic had to blend into the suit, which is unusual; standard practice is to blend the makeup into the actor’s skin or overlap it onto another piece of rubber.

While developing the concept, Bottin had no idea how it would interlock: “You sculpt it as one piece; then you figure out what part is suit and what is face. We ended up with three chins to hide the suit.” Bottin and King worked together on a method of application, which King executed on actor Peter O’Farrel: the appliance edges had to be velcroed to the edges of the suit; then King would apply grease-paint and stippling and trim the beard.

King chose Linda Devetta to do Blix, which included a cone-head, face-piece, lynx ears, lower fangs, and a wig styled and greased to give a slimy punk-rock look. “It was funny to see Alice Playton transformed into Blix, because she has very feminine curves,” said Bottin. “Ridley and costume designer Charles Knode had to come up with a costume to hide her figure. She wore tights, so they added padding to misshape her legs; and a breastplate hid the other problems, if you know what I mean.”

Nick Dudman applied makeup for Brown Tom O’Kirkdale. Bottin enjoyed designing Tom because he is a “drunken fairy,” said Bottin. “I gave him goofy ears (a la Dopey from THE SEVEN DWARFS), a huge nose to make his eyes look closer together and less intelligent, a silly upper lip, buck teeth, and a balding head like Larry in The Three Stooges. Actor Cork Hub-

bert was very supportive of the process. He even shaved his head to save time on application, which surprised me because it’s not something actors prefer.”

Compared to the other characters in the film, the makeup for Billy Barty (as Screwball) and David Bennent (as Gump) was less extensive.

“I was thrilled to work with Billy, because I’d seen him on TV since I was a kid. If you’re thinking along the lines of Tolkien, he looks like he’s already halfway there. Most of the features were there, we just exaggerated them and led the prosthetics into his own wrinkles. He had two great makeup artists working on him: Jane Royale and Pauline Heys.” David Bennent wore even less makeup: skin coloring, eyeshadow, and Spock-type ears. “Fortunately for him, his appearance is such that with a minimum of makeup, he looks like a pixie out of a fairy tale. Louis Burwell did a beautiful coloring job—Ridley wanted him to look very alabastine, really magical.”

Because they had worked with actor Bob Picardo previously on THE HOWLING, Bottin and Vince Prentice applied Picardo’s makeup as Meg Mucklebones. “Picardo does not like performing these characters, because actors don’t want to be covered in makeup. When I first told him Ridley Scott was making a picture, he said, ‘Rob, now I know you wouldn’t be doing it unless there was some form of torture involved for an actor, and that’s probably why you’re here to see me.’”

“The funny thing was, when we got Picardo out there in this giant disgusting witch costume, Ridley looked at him and started chuckling, ‘That looks great. Why don’t we put snakes in his hair?’ Picardo already had contact lenses, a rubber hump on his back, hands like tarantulas, and sixty gallons of KY Jelly dumped all over him.

“Ridley said, ‘Do you mind, Bob, if we put just a few snakes on your head?’ I thought Picardo would throw a fit, but he said, ‘No, actually if they’re on my head the only place they could possibly attack me is my tongue because that’s the only thing not covered with foam rubber.’ I think the makeup is shocking in a fun way; it was like a childhood memory of *Eerie* and *Creepy* magazines.”

The most difficult challenge was Darkness (pictured on cover). From the beginning, Bottin and Scott had agreed on a Satanic look for the character, because neither felt such an approach had been done correctly. Originally, Bottin

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Above: Annabelle Lanyon as Oona, a pixie-like fairy who takes human form and falls in love with Jack. Oona and the evil mirror face of Lili were two makeups devised by English supervisor Nick Dudman. Below: Two Bottin characters, Billy Barty as Screwball and Cork Hubbert as Brown Tom. Barty’s elf-like features required little makeup. Prosthetics for Hubbert included a one-piece cone head with ears, bald cap, eyebags, nose and a jewels piece with upper lip.





stages and getting on with some editing in the interim."

Scott also credited his producer, Arnon Milchan, with getting a project the size of *LEGEND* completed smoothly. "Control is the key word in my vocabulary," said Scott. "The role of a good producer is to protect me from most of the outside pressures in order to keep my resources channeled into the film. If it hadn't been for Arnon, I doubt whether I'd have made *LEGEND*. He is so good at deals, and one of the few men who could have organized this project so well. He was totally supportive throughout and I feel his European attitude to film was a blessing counterbalancing Hjortsberg's input."

**S**cott doubts that *LEGEND* would have been a better film if it had been scaled down and had a smaller budget. "If that had been the case I would have had to have shot in an actual forest and we couldn't have stylized settings or characters," he said. "Actually, I was a bit envious of this year's *THE COMPANY OF WOLVES*. They did so much on a minuscule budget. But while that was an enormous success in England it closed in America after a week. American audiences couldn't seem to grasp the denseness of the plot or the sequential build-up of the story, which is one reason why I have eliminated a lot of the subtext and detailing from my original cut of *LEGEND*."

Scott's first cut of *LEGEND* was 125 minutes long, which he felt dwelt unnecessarily on minor plot points. The next cut was 113 minutes long, which was test marketed in Orange County and was considered perfect. Perfect that is for an audience who didn't mind working at being entertained. So



Tom Cruise, teen star of *RISKY BUSINESS*, as Jack O' the Green, a legendary green man of the forest who becomes a warrior.

another two reels were removed, totalling 20 minutes. In Great Britain, *LEGEND* will run 95 minutes long but before the film debuts in America it is going to lose even more footage, as Scott explained.

"European audiences are more sophisticated," he said. "They accept preambles and subtleties whereas the U.S. goes for a much broader stroke. Americans are governed by the media, which I consider totally unhealthy. On MTV the younger generation, especially, watches sub-par montages all day long which makes them impatient. Nowadays 16-22 year-olds seem to have missed the educational process that makes them aware of classical references enough to be attracted by them.

It's a sad fact of life but you are obliged to take note of that. You would be a fool not to.

"The American cut of *LEGEND* is much simpler," continued Scott. "The clockmaker's cottage sequence, showing the real world, is being removed so the film will open on Jack and Lili meeting in the glade. Therefore the comparison in really obvious terms of what Darkness' rule has meant before and after Lili enters the cottage will be lost. Also Darkness' entrance may be moved up to stop the audience from getting restless. Structurally I prefer holding him back as in the European print. Also on my insistence, part of the campaign for *LEGEND* will point out that it isn't my usual sort of film."

Despite rumors that Ridley Scott's next film will be a Duran Duran vehicle, he hasn't really decided what to do although a musical would seem a natural progression. One thing for certain, he has nothing whatsoever to do with Fox's upcoming sequel to *ALIEN*, titled *ALIENS*.

"I was slightly hurt that I wasn't even asked to be involved, even at a reduced fee," he said. "I'm sure the thinking behind the project is that they can rework the idea at a lower budget. I'm slightly surprised that none of the original personnel from this country are involved, but I'm sure director James Cameron will do a good job. *THE TERMINATOR* was an interesting item and shared with *ALIEN* a similar, relentless quality to my way of thinking." □

## Makeup Credits

The Rob Bottin Productions makeup crew for *LEGEND* was the largest ever assembled:

Production manager, Richard White. Production auditor, Ralph Leo. Production assistant, Fernando Favila. Sculptural design, Henry Alvarez. Lead special makeup artist, Vince Prentice. Staff shop supervisor, Ralph Cobos. Lab technician supervisor, John Goodwin. Cosmetic paint supervisor, Margaret Beserra. Cosmetic hair supervisor, Becky Ochoa. Production coordinators, Mike Sorrentino, Iya Labunka, Chuck Montoya.

England chief makeup supervisor, Peter Robb-King. Makeup artists, Nick Dudman, Linda Devetta, Jane Royale, Pauline Heys, Louis Burwell. Makeup laboratory, Sue Oakes, Verner Gresky, Sue Reynolds.

Technicians, Jarek Alfer, Max Alvarez, Don Angier, Bobby Belknap, Ed Branson, Patricia Brewer, Pat Cardamone, Roberto Carlos, Basil Casabona, Ron Castro, Jerry Chinn, Mike Cobos, Guy Deel, Ken Diaz, Katalin Elek, Dawn Evans, Ed Felix, Gunnar Ferdinandsen, Laura Filip, Tammy Fites, Art Flores, Camille Forgy, Susan Forrest, Eddie Garcia, Royanne Garrison, Rowena Gibbs, Kim Graham, Ginger Grieve, Joe Griffith, Mike Hill, Jack Johnson, Werner Keppler, Marty Kline, Sheri Koskie, Eric Kottner, Phil Mantione, Lauren Marems, Richard Medina, Ann Montoya, Greg Nelson, Robert Newman, Kyle Nicholson, Robert Olivias, Edie Panda, Dennis Pawlik, Alba Pedrola, Patrick Philbin, Art Pimental, John Rizzo, Richard Ruiz, Carol Schwartz, Ernie Shelton, Dwight Shundo, Mark Silver, Tom Small, Wayne Strong, Caryl Tharp, Jackie Tichenor, Steve Townsend, Josephine Turner.

Screwball (Billy Barty) catches the shield-size silver plates which Brown Tom frisbees across the kitchen past the sleeping bodies of two giant cooks.





# The DOCTOR and the DEVILS

*A serious "this is no horror film" version of the oft told story of graverobbers Burke and Hare.*

by Greg Mank  
and Janrae Frank

And as Fettes took the lamp his companion untied the fastenings of the sack and drew down the cover from the head. The light fell very clear upon the dark, well-moulded features and smooth-shaven cheeks of a too-familiar countenance, often beheld in dreams of both these young men. A wild yell rang up into the night; each leaped from his own side into the roadway; the lamp fell, broke, and was extinguished; and the horse, terrified by this unusual commotion, bounded and went off toward Edinburgh at a gallop, bearing along with it, sole occupant of the gig, the body of the dead and long-dissected Gray.

The final paragraph  
of Robert Louis Stevenson's  
"The Body-Snatcher"

Robert Louis Stevenson's concept for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) evolved from a nightmare; the idea for *The Body-Snatcher* (1885) came from history. It was in Edinburgh in 1827 that one William Burke suggested to his landlord, William Hare, that they steal the body of an old lodger named Donald and sell it to Dr. Robert Knox, who operated a Surgeon's Square Anatomy School. They stole the cadaver from the coffin, filled the empty casket with tanner's bark and received over 7 pounds from the grateful Knox.

When another dying lodger took his time succumbing, Burke and Hare accelerated matters, and smothered him—making another sale to Knox. With the aid of Burke's wife and Hare's mistress, the duo killed anywhere from 14 to 28 drunks, hags and whores, all of



Director Freddie Francis blocks out a scene for graverobbers Jonathan Pryce and Stephen Rea in *THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS*, released by 20th Century-Fox.

whom were plied with liquor and held down by Burke while Hare "Burked" them (i. e. held his hand over their nose and mouth until they smothered), and delivered them to Knox's cellar.

Their downfall began when they "Burked" Mary Paterson, a beautiful 18 year-old voluptuary instantly recognized by Knox's young anatomy students—several of whom had enjoyed Mary's favors. Authorities later apprehended Burke and Hare concealing a female corpse, and a sensational trial became the talk of the British Isles. Hare gave state's evidence and was freed, but a mob violently encouraged him to flee to England. Burke, who refused to give evidence, was convicted (despite the fact that his wife sat in court daily with their baby in a

desperate bid for sympathy). On Wednesday, January 28, 1829, William Burke was hung before a rapturous crowd of 30,000. As the hangman slipped the noose around Burke's neck, the hysterical mob screamed, "Burke him!" As for the patrician Dr. Knox, in a sign of the class-conscious times, he simply went into exile.

*THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS*, released October 4 by 20th Century-Fox, is the latest screen incarnation of the Burke and Hare story, directed by horror film veteran Freddie Francis, and produced by Mel Brooks' Brooksfilms. Francis had long wanted to direct the script, which was originally written by poet Dylan Thomas in 1953, and has been adapted by Ronald Harwood, the Academy-Award nominated writer of

#### THE DRESSER.

Francis took the property to Brooksfilms and Jonathan Sanger, who acted as producer, reuniting the creative forces behind Brooksfilms' acclaimed production of *THE ELEPHANT MAN* (1980), which Francis photographed. Jonathan Pryce (the devil in *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*) and Stephen Rea (*THE COMPANY OF WOLVES*) play graverobbers Fallon and Broom. Timothy Dalton (Prince Barron of DeLaurentis' *FLASH GORDON*) plays unorthodox anatomist Dr. Thomas Rock.

The Robert Louis Stevenson novel based on the Burke and Hare incident became a classic horror film in 1945, with Boris Karloff as the graverobber (called Gray by Stevenson) and Bela Lugosi as an added horror draw. The film, directed by a later Oscar-winner, Robert Wise, is famous for its horrific climax, quoted above, in which the body of the graverobber—killed and dissected by the doctor he was blackmailing—seems to come to life in the doctor's coach late at night after the doctor has tried his own hand at graverobbing.

The story of Burke and Hare served as the basis for a number of subsequent film productions, all British and mostly in the horror vein. Director John Gilling's *THE FLESH AND THE FIENDS* was made in 1960, starring Peter Cushing as Dr. Knox and George Rose and Donald Pleasence as Burke and Hare. Gilling had written a Burke and Hare inspired script for *THE GREED OF WILLIAM HART* in 1948, which featured British horror star Tod Slaughter.





Above: Timothy Dalton as Dr. Thomas Rock, a professor of anatomy in nineteenth-century Edinburgh, surrounded by graverobbers Jonathan Pryce and Stephen Rea (right).  
Below: Pryce and Rea on an atmospheric graveyard set built at England's Shepperton Studios, designed by production designer Robert Laing.





THE ANATOMIST (1961) was a historical retelling of the Burke and Hare Saga, starring Alastair Sim and based on the play by James Bridie. BURKE AND HARE (1971), featured Harry Andrews as Dr. Knox and Derren Nesbitt and Glynn Edwards as Burke and Hare, and emphasized nudity in its portrayal of Burke and Hare as lusty victimizers of Edinburgh streetwalkers. DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE (1971) combined both Robert Louis Stevenson stories and had Burke and Hare in a minor subplot supplying bodies to Dr. Jekyll.

Despite the story's pedigree and the hiring of Francis as director, the producers insist that THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS is not a horror film. "I think most of all it's a film of ideas, and films of ideas are generally not accessible as action films or horror films," said producer Jonathan Sanger.

"The idea Dylan Thomas had when he wrote the script was that there was a very significant issue raised by this case: whether or not the ends justify the means. At what cost do we research? Do we make a breakthrough? The theme has a great deal of contemporary relevance. The situation in modern medicine hasn't changed that much. As we go farther in scientific research there is always a human cost, and there is always a moral question as to whether that human cost is worth the potential advance that may result from said research."

Given the film's subject matter and Francis as director, Sanger felt a need to convince distributors and the public that THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS wasn't some kind of cheap exploitation film. Both Sanger and Francis are uncomfortable with the fact that most of the notice the film has attracted has been as a horror film. They feel that kind of label could preclude the film from reaching the kind of critical and commercial success both obviously hope for it.

"The genre, whatever it may be that THE ELEPHANT MAN falls into, is also the genre that THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS is part of," said Sanger. "It is a dramatic film with elements of the macabre. But in this case the elements of horror are secondary to the elements of story construction and characterization. Nothing in the picture is done strictly for its intent to shock. While there is a great deal of horror in THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS it is not a horror film."

No doubt Robert Louis Stevenson would say the same thing about *The Body-Snatcher* if he were around to defend it. □

# Val Lewton's THE BODY SNATCHER

*Director Robert Wise and producer Val Lewton made the story of Burke and Hare a horror film classic.*

by Greg Mank

In early 1944, the lantern burned again above the gate of Boris Karloff's farm, high in Coldwater Canyon. The star was back in Hollywood after a year-and-a-half Broadway romp as mad Jonathan Brewster in ARSENIC AND OLD LACE, followed by a 66-week national tour. Upon his triumphant return to the cinema colony, the King of Hollywood Macabre discovered that the horror genre as mined by his frequent employer, Universal Pictures, was experiencing a revolution.

Over at rival studio RKO, Vladimir Ivan Lewton, dubbed RKO's "Maharaja of Mayhem," was creating shadowy, suggestive nightmare tales such as 1942's CAT PEOPLE and 1943's I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE and THE SEVENTH VICTIM, which were the antithesis of Universal's product. "At Universal," said young RKO director Mark Robson, "the prevailing idea of horror was a werewolf chasing a girl in a nightgown up a tree."

Karloff, for one, found Lewton's work to be "fabulous." And in 1944, Boris Karloff and Val Lewton—the legendary star of gothic Hollywood horror and the novel producer of poetic, sinister shadows—would join forces to create one of the greatest horror films of the era.

Lewton became a "B" producer at RKO after 8 years as an assistant to David O. Selznick. Highly strung, emotional, hypersensitive, Lewton had two special phobias—being touched (dreading even handshakes) and cats. Ironically, his first film was CAT PEOPLE: dark, shadowy, alive with subtle sexual undertones and Simone Simon's feline performance, this \$134,000 film grossed an international \$4,000,000, saving RKO (then in the wake of free-spending Orson Welles' CITIZEN KANE and THE MAG-



RKO producer Val Lewton.

NIFICENT AMBERSONS) from bankruptcy.

Yet there was little respect forthcoming for Lewton. Certainly none came from his mother, sophisticate Nina Lewton (for years head of MGM's New York story department), or his famous actress aunt, Alla Nazimova. "Nina Lewton was so shocked that she wouldn't go see CAT PEOPLE even after it had become a box office hit," said Dewitt Bodeen, author of the CAT PEOPLE screenplay. "I offered to get a projection room in New York City and show it to her, but she only shook her head with a shudder."

Nor was there much respect at RKO, according to *Val Lewton: The Reality of Terror*, Joel E. Siegel's definitive biography of Lewton. According to Siegel's book, when Lewton was arguing with RKO studio manager Charles Koerner and cited the success of CAT PEOPLE, Koerner (actually Lewton's champion at the studio, and the man who had assigned CAT PEOPLE to Lewton) snorted: "The only people who saw that film, were Negroes and defense workers."

Then in 1944, RKO engaged a new executive producer to oversee Lewton's work—Jack J. Gross. He was formerly of Universal, where he was associate producer of the lavish Technicolor 1943 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. Lewton considered his new supervisor "an abysmally ignorant and stupid gentleman," for Gross had his own definite ideas as to the production of horror films—and they clashed violently with Lewton's.

Lewton had two beloved proteges at RKO: Mark Robson (who died several years ago) and Robert Wise. Today, after Best Director Oscars for WEST SIDE STORY and THE SOUND OF MUSIC, Wise remembers his early days at RKO with great affection.

"Lewton's whole belief was that you could frighten people more by being less specific sometimes, if you were skillful," said Wise. "Gross came from a school that took the opposite approach. He held that a horror film should use overt scare tactics. It was Gross who urged and insisted on bringing Karloff to RKO for a horror film, or a series of them..."

Initially, Lewton was crestfallen. For the producer who made audiences scream via a superbly timed screech of bus brakes in CAT PEOPLE, the idea of Karloff was akin to hiring the Boogey Man.

"Lewton had nothing personal against Karloff," said Wise. "But he found the idea not really very much to his taste... He searched for story material that would have quality even though he was using the 'scare' actor who had made his name as Frankenstein's Monster."

Reluctantly, Lewton arranged a meeting for Karloff to visit RKO, to meet with Robson and Wise. It was a pleasant surprise... "when he [Karloff] turned those eyes on us," Wise told Cynthia Lindsay in her book *Dear Boris*, "and that velvet



voice said, 'Good afternoon, gentlemen,' we were his, and never thought about anything else."

Lewton had a great desire to move out of his "B" movie environs. While he loved the freedom of low-budget moviemaking, this complex man felt acute pressure to move up the Hollywood rung to more prestigious work. Believing Karloff would aid the cause, Lewton busily researched story material which would fit the horror star and hopefully appeal to Karloff so as to cinch his RKO contract.

Karloff project #1 was ISLE OF THE DEAD, from a Boecklin painting. It had fascinated Lewton during his childhood days, as it hung in "Who-Turok," Nazimova's country cottage in the "Sleepy Hollow" area of New York State. The boy had enjoyed scaring himself by making up gruesome stories about the painting. Karloff project #2 came from literature—a rather forsaken Robert Louis Stevenson story entitled *The Body Snatcher*, with Karloff to play the title character.

In an RKO inter-department communication dated Wednesday, May 10, 1944, Lewton wrote:

Dear Mr. Gross:

Subject to your approval we have decided upon Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher" as the best possible subject for the second Karloff picture. The story needs development because as it is told now, the character we would like Karloff to play is a fragmentary one called "Gray." But if you will read the story you will see the possibility of developing "Gray" into a truly horrendous person.

You probably want to know the reasons for our selection of this story above the others. They are as follows:

1. The title seems good to us.
2. There is exploitation value in the use of a famous Robert Louis

Stevenson classic.

3. There is a ninety percent chance that this is in the public domain. The legal department is now searching the title.

4. The characters are colorful. The background of London medical life in the 1830's is extremely interesting. The sets are limited in number but effective in type. The costumes are readily procurable and no great difficulties of any sort so far as production is concerned are evident.

5. There is also an excellent part for Bela Lugosi as a resurrection man.

Lewton had set the stage for the 8th and last feature to team the talking screen's two greatest horror stars.

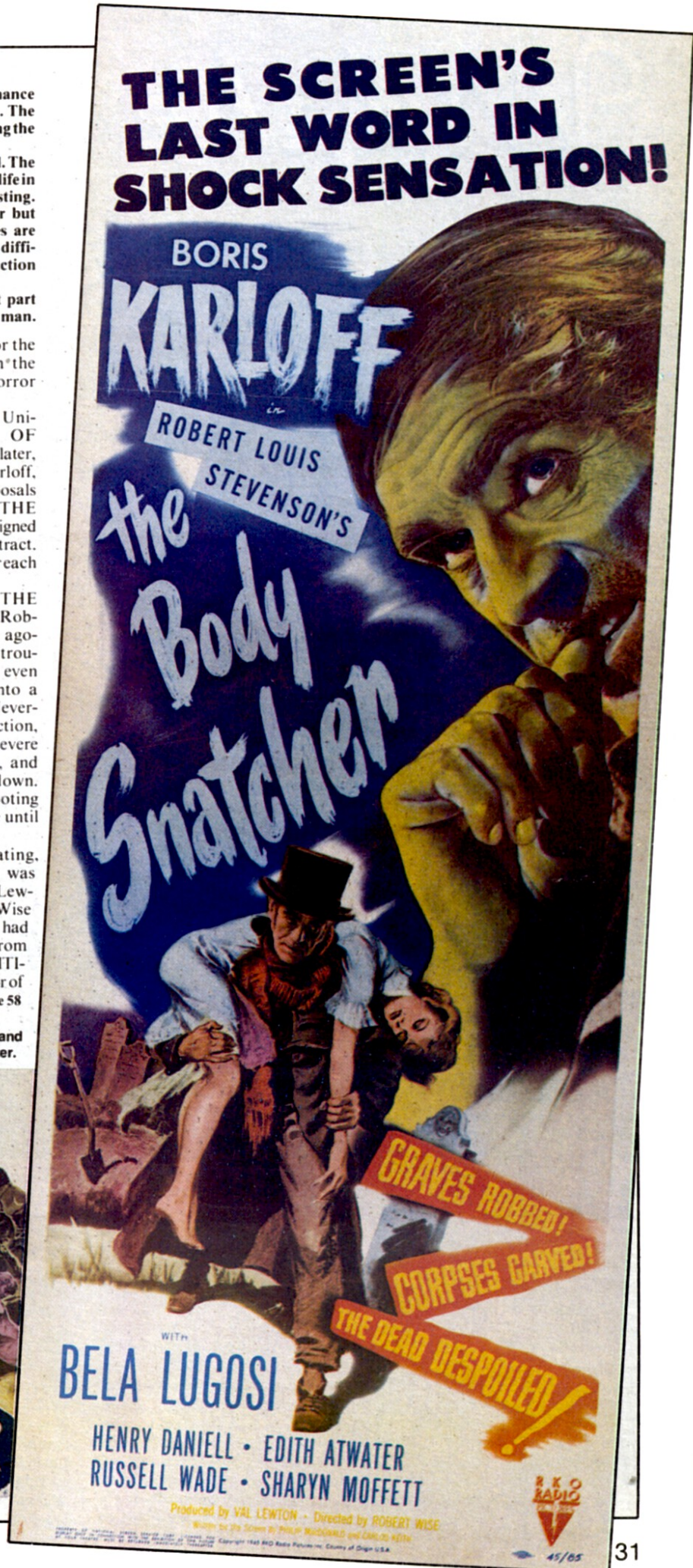
On Monday, May 8, 1944, Universal "wrapped" HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. Ten days later, Thursday, May 18, 1944, Karloff, having studied Lewton's proposals on ISLE OF THE DEAD and THE BODY SNATCHER, happily signed a two-picture RKO star contract. The salary: \$6,000 per week for each picture.

On July 14, 1944, ISLE OF THE DEAD began shooting, Mark Robson directing. Karloff was in agony—in terrific pain from back trouble. He bravely carried on, even after the pain forced him into a wheelchair between scenes. Nevertheless, 8 days into the production, Karloff's condition was so severe that he entered the hospital, and ISLE OF THE DEAD shut down. The cast dispersed, and shooting was suspended (not to resume until 12/1/44).

As Karloff was recuperating, THE BODY SNATCHER was evolving. From its inception, Lewton wanted his friend Robert Wise to direct. The 30-year old Wise had risen through the RKO ranks, from film porter to editor of Welles' CITIZEN KANE to 2nd unit director of

continued on page 58

Below: Russell Wade as Fettes, the conscience-troubled medical assistant, and romantic interest Rita Corday as Widow Marsh. Right: The film's 1954 poster.





# Will the real Sloth please stand up?

**Steven Spielberg, two Sloths and a giant octopus—THE GOONIES story that didn't make it to the screen.**

by Carol H. Blake

The Steven Spielberg-produced summer hit, *THE GOONIES*, which proved so popular with the younger set, is not the movie it started out to be. A number of special effects sequences which were actually filmed ended up on the cutting room floor. Although Spielberg had approved the sequences in the shooting script, when he saw them in completed form while looking at the rushes, he decided that they interrupted the pacing of the story. Spielberg also felt that the film worked better as a believable adventure if the fantastic elements were played down.

Among the changes made were the deletion of a substantial portion of the scenes with the monstrous but loveable Sloth, played by former football star John Matuszak, one of the most heartwarming and memorable makeup creations in recent years, realized by Craig Reardon and The Burman Studios. Much of the relationship and most of the dialogue between Sloth and the pudgy and equally loveable Chunk, the clown of the Goonies gang played by Jeff Cohen, fell by the wayside in the process. Two other sequences, one in which the kids battle a giant octopus and another in which they fight a band of apes, were cut in their entirety.

The apes were ones that Rick Baker made for *GREYSTOKE*, which are owned by Warner Bros, the distributor of *THE GOONIES*. The main ape was performed by Don McCleod, who played the ape in *TANYA'S ISLAND*. The apes appeared early in the film, encountered by older brother Josh Brolin as he searches along the beach road for his little brother and the rest of the "Goonies." The simians, supposedly escapees from a zoo or circus, are seen stealing a car and in other hijinx but



Craig Reardon's makeup for Sloth, seen in the sequence when the creature is first discovered underground. Reardon was replaced on the film by the Burman Studios.

were never adequately explained.

Director Richard Donner argued for the inclusion of the Octopus sequence, but was overruled by Spielberg. Shortly after the film's release, when it was performing less than expected at the boxoffice, Donner and Ke Huy-Quan, one of the kid stars, were shipped out by Warner Bros on a press junket to promote the film. Donner expressed disappointment at seeing the Octopus go and said it looked tremendous in the film. Donner downplayed any creative differences with Spielberg,

adding that the producer only showed up on the set three days during filming.

Glenn Lovell, an enterprising newspaper reporter in San Jose, got a different picture of *THE GOONIES* filming when he took Ke Huy-Quan aside for a private interview. The loquacious Huy-Quan, as much a mischievous character in person as on film, revealed that Spielberg was not only on the set *every day*, but directed all of the film's second unit work, including car crashes and the story's slapstick opening.

Huy-Quan also added that Spielberg often insisted that Donner reshoot scenes that were unsatisfactory, and provided an imitation of Spielberg chewing-out Donner that he said was a regular occurrence on the production.

Special effects makeup master, Tom Burman, who worked on the makeup and special effects for Sloth and the giant octopus readily admitted that the cuts made by Spielberg, "hurt [his] feelings . . . my contribution to the success of the film was lessened. Obviously we [at the Burman Studios] would have liked the success of *THE GOONIES* to bank on our work." Sloth is Burman's favorite character to date which made his reduced role all the more disappointing.

Burman spent the earliest part of his special effects apprenticeship at 20th Century-Fox making monsters for their science fiction television series *LOST IN SPACE*, *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA*, and *TIME TUNNEL*. He went on to share a coveted Emmy award with his mentor John Chambers for the four part television series *PRIMAL MAN*. Burman's work has included *STAR TREK III*, *THE MANITOU*, and the *grand guignol* horror effects in *HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME*.

Burman was assisted on *THE GOONIES* by his brother Ellis, and his wife Bari Dreiband Burman, a special effects makeup master in her own right. The Burmans were called in to complete the film's special effects makeup work when makeup artist Craig Reardon, who executed Sloth's original design, was dismissed by coproducer Harvey Bernhard.

Reardon was brought in to work on Sloth only a month and a-half before production was scheduled to begin. Spielberg conceived of Sloth as a cross between cartoon character Baby Huey (a humongus baby duck that is con-





Above: Executive producer Steven Spielberg poses with the Burmans' Sloth during filming, and with the Burmans: Tom Burman, Bari Dreiband Burman, and Ellis Burman. Below: The Burmans pose with actor John Matuszak, who played Sloth. Ellis (right) holds a life-cast of the actor fitted with the mechanism he designed to make Sloth's deformed eye work. The Burmans were called-in to redesign the makeup when Craig Reardon failed to make the eye work, after filming had begun.

stantly demolishing things during attempts at play because he doesn't know his own strength) and the Hunchback of Notre Dame. Spielberg presented Reardon with a thumbnail sketch that was more or less a stick figure with big ears and a lowered eye.

With a deformed skull, one eye inches lower than the other, snagged, missing teeth and peaked ears that rotate to follow the movement of sound, Sloth was a particularly difficult character to realize. The role required numerous close-ups, which would reveal any imperfections in the makeup, its design or application. Reardon's first approach was a series of highly realistic sketches but Spielberg felt that they were too realistic and had Reardon change to a more cartoonish approach.

Spielberg's concept called for Sloth's ears and lowered eye to be animated. Because Spielberg and Bernhard took several weeks to decide between Jake Steinfeld and

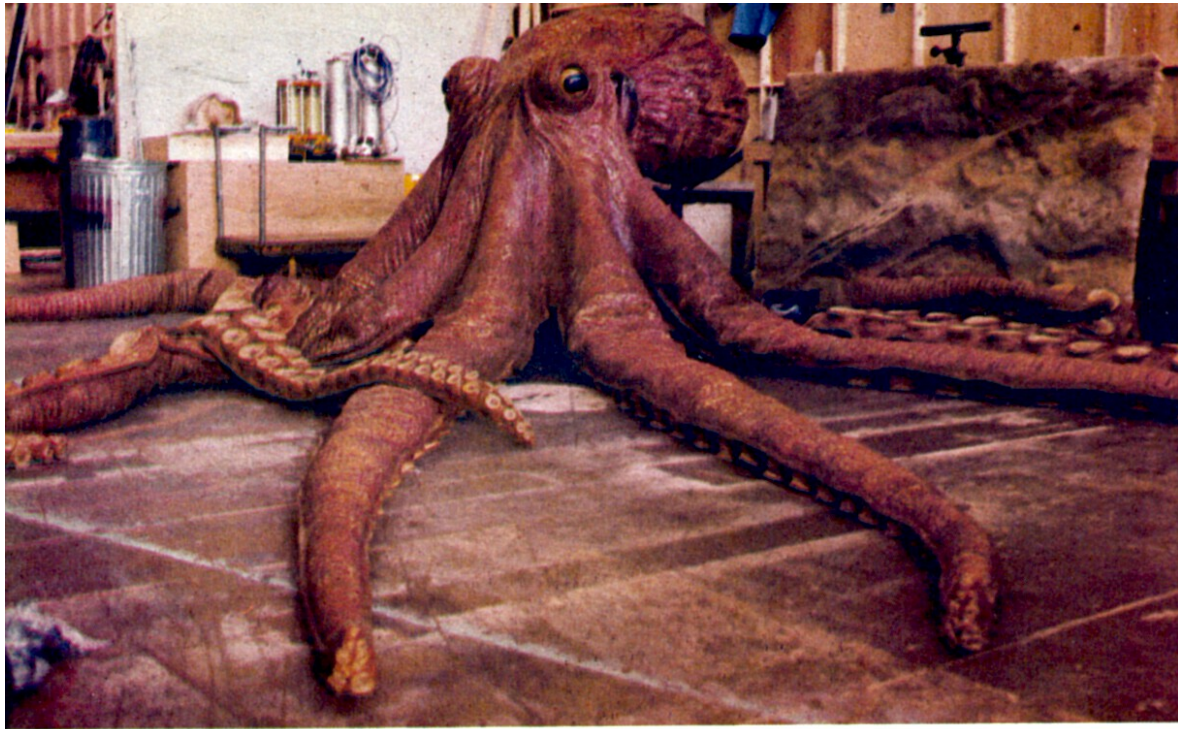
John Matuszak to play Sloth, Reardon had only three weeks to put the makeup together and it wasn't enough time to incorporate the animated eye.

Reardon also blames his "stubborn determination to make something 'amazing' out of" Spielberg's concept for his failure to complete the effect on time. "I did not want to go the simple route of building on a big false eye that would protrude from the face in an obvious manner," he said. "But trying to achieve an inset look and have it operate realistically proved to be an insurmountable problem. Before I was let go I built a hemisphere mechanism for the eye which rotated on a miniature universal joint, and it showed every sign of success without protruding very much from the face. It was a shame I didn't make this compromise earlier."

Bernhard finally lost patience with Reardon's attempts to get the special effects functioning (the







The Burman Studios' giant octopus for GOONIES—30 feet across, 4.5 feet tall—was cut from the film by Steven Spielberg.

ears worked fine) and Reardon was let go. Despite the disappointment, Reardon parted amiably with Bernhard and Spielberg, and hopes to work with them again in the future. THE GOONIES was Reardon's fourth Spielberg production, having worked on POLTERGEIST, E.T., and TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE.

With time running out, Bernhard called in the Burmans with whom he had worked successfully on THE BEAST WITHIN (1982). Somewhat ironically, years before Spielberg deleted Tom Burman's credit on CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND after a disagreement over Burman's alien designs (see 7:3/7:4:4). The Burmans redesigned the Sloth makeup for Bernhard with mechanics supplied by Ellis Burman and partner Bob Williams to make it work. Ellis Burman and Williams operate their own special effects studio, Cosmekinetics, specializing in mechanical and electronic character effects.

The radio-controlled mechanism that made Sloth's ears wiggle,

raise and lowered the lid of his dead eye and made the eye itself move, fit John Matuszak's head like an electronic skull cap. The dead eye apparatus rested against the lower part of the actor's left cheek. To disguise the rig, a foam rubber appliance mask created by Tom Burman fit over Matuszak's face and head, changing its contours and hiding the mechanism that controlled the eye.

Reardon praised the work of the Burman Studios for their quick solution to the makeup's mechanical problems, but pointed out that the look of the character, aside from its grotesque protruding eye, is his design. "The Burman Studio's copy of my makeup is so good that it is indistinguishable from my own makeup in the film," said Reardon. "In spite of its malfunctioning eye, the production saved a great deal of footage featuring my makeup in the final cut, in the scenes where Sloth is first discovered and meets Chunk." A photo of Reardon's Sloth was even used in the film's merchandising, in a poster for Baby Ruth of

Sloth and Chunk which exploits the scene where the two share a candy bar.

It took three and-a-half hours for the Burmans to turn John Matuszak into Sloth, and the process had to be repeated each morning for filming. Sometimes Matuszak had to sit sweating in the mask for hours waiting for his turn before the cameras. "Obviously when you're encapsulated in makeup like that, glued, wearing an electronic helmet piece, it is extremely uncomfortable," said Tom Burman. "Matuszak never complained, though I know he was very distraught at times. And his performance was wonderful."

Burman was assisted on THE GOONIES makeup sessions by his wife Bari, who had several years experience in the field of makeup before meeting Tom when they were both hired to work on the special makeup effects for Paul Schrader's CAT PEOPLE. Bari Dreiband Burman's training and talent for the creation of foam rubber and appliance masks overlap those of her husband. Because

their abilities are interchangeable, the couple are able to pick which aspect of a given special effects project they prefer when working on shared assignments.

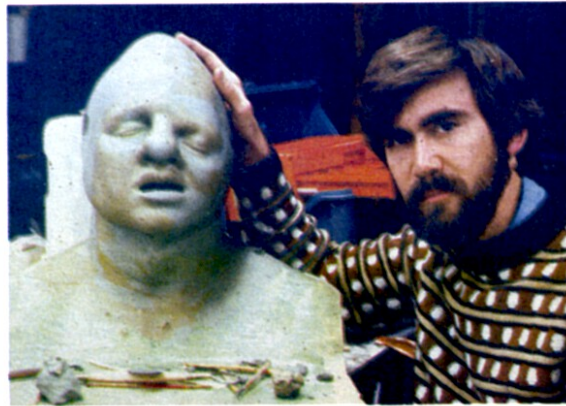
The film's makeup is so realistic and Matuszak's acting so moving, that Sloth has become GOONIES fans' favorite character. Like E.T., many of the younger viewers seem to think he is real. Ten year-old Jeff Cohen who played Chunk, discovered that not even his classmates are immune to the feeling. Said Cohen, "They're always saying, 'Hey, Jeff, come over to my house—and bring Sloth with you!' They think he lives with me."

Cohen worked more closely with Sloth than anyone else in THE GOONIES. "The hardest part was to get the scene over fast," he said. "With all that makeup you don't want to take any more time than you need to."

Coincidentally, Chunk was also in the giant octopus scene, the Burmans' other special effect that was completely cut from the final film. "The Octopus we made for THE GOONIES was thirty feet across," said Tom Burman. "Lying on the floor it stood about 4½ feet tall. Its eye alone was four inches in diameter. It was animated and articulated by the special effects people at the studio [Amblin Productions]. We made it out of polyurethane molding compound that was very flexible. It was painted. Another glazing compound was laid over that to make it look real wet and slippery." The octopus took nine weeks for the Burmans to make.

In the scene that was cut, Chunk and Sloth fight the Octopus prior to rescuing their friends from the Fratellis. Ironically, a mention of the Octopus was left in the film even though the scene was cut. At the end, when the kids are reunited with their parents on the beach, Chunk is asked to name the most harrowing part of his adventure. "The Octopus," he says, an editing oversight caused by rushing the film's post-production to meet its scheduled summer opening. □

Makeup artist Craig Reardon poses with one of his early designs for Sloth (detailed left and right), deemed too realistic by Steven Spielberg, who wanted a cartoon approach.





*The fizz is missing from Spielberg's magic formula  
—too much cartoon violence, too little characterization.*

**THE GOONIES**

A Warner Bros. release, 6/85, 111 mins. In color and dolby stereo. Director, Richard Donner. Producers: Richard Donner and Harvey Bernhard. Executive producers: Steven Spielberg, Frank Marshall, and Kathleen Kennedy. Screenplay by Chris Columbus. Story by Steven Spielberg. Director of photography, Nick McLean. Production designer, J. Michael Riva. Editor, Michael Kahn. Art director, Rick Carter. Set decorator, Linda DeScenna. Set designers, Virginia L. Randolph, Carrol Johnston, Donald Woodruff. Visual effects supervisor, Michael McAlister. Music by Dave Grusin.

Mikey	Sean Astin
Brand	Josh Brolin
Chunk	Jeff Cohen
Mouth	Corey Feldman
Andy	Kerri Green
Stef	Martha Plimpton
Data	Ke Huy Quan
Sloth	John Matuszak
Jake	Robert Davi
Francis	Joe Pantoliano
Mama Fratelli	Anne Ramsey

by Kyle Counts

When I think of Steven Spielberg, I think not of JAWS or CLOSE ENCOUNTERS or even E.T., but THE HEARTBREAK KID. At the end of that film, Charles Grodin, freshly married to his fantasy blonde, Cybill Shepherd, is shown sitting on a couch at the post-wedding party, talking with two children, apparently unable to find an adult who is willing to hold a conversation with him.

The difference between Grodin's character and Spielberg, of course, is that Spielberg wouldn't be chatting with adolescents because he *had* to; he'd *prefer* their company, since he obviously has so much in common with kids. He would probably be the first to agree that his films about charismatic der-ring-do heroes, friendly aliens, and nightmares with happy endings are all part of his quest to remain eternally young.

Last summer, Spielberg exorcised the dark side of his personality by teaming up with Joe Dante to make GREMLINS, a dark horror-comedy that was a welcome relief from the soggy sentiment of Spielberg's contribution to TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE. THE GOONIES, also scripted by GREMLINS writer Chris Columbus (based on a story by Spielberg), was touted as the entry to beat in this year's Summer Movie Sweepstakes. For starters, the title of the Richard Donner film (only in a Spielberg project does a director's credit seem like subordinate billing) sounds an awful lot like GREMLINS (no accident, you can be sure), leading some people to think—erroneously—that a sequel was being concocted in the megaproducer's usual top secret manner. Then there's the carefully timed Cyndi Lauper video (featuring Spielberg in a cameo role) for the movie's theme song, which openly points to the pirates-and-treasure-map plot of THE GOONIES—the perfect promotional tie-in to heighten word-of-mouth among the popcorn and Reese's Pieces set.

Warner Bros may have done a good job in the hype and merchandising department, but the fizz is missing from Spielberg's magic formula this time around. THE GOONIES is



Sloth's pal Chunk, played by Jeff Cohen.

a profoundly bad movie, as calculated and mechanical as a garage door opener. A movie that bills itself as an action-adventure romp—especially one primarily aimed at children—should be whimsical, charming, exciting, or at least *fun*. THE GOONIES is loud, abrasive, overextended, dumb, and astoundingly joyless. It's like being force-fed stale cupcakes.

Granted, THE GOONIES has a cute concept. A bunch of bored kids, hanging around the house one rainy afternoon, go rummaging through the attic and find a map that is supposed to lead to the hidden treasure of a famous pirate—One-Eyed Jack. Led by an asthmatic youngster named Mikey Walsh (Sean Astin) the more adventurous of the gang (which for reasons that remain unclear calls itself "The Goonies") decide to go searching for the booty. Meanwhile, a mean old land contractor plans to tear down Mikey's house and replace it with a golf course, so this is their last chance as official Goonies to undertake a secret mission and save the Walsh estate in the process. Astin, son of Patty Duke and John Astin, is easily the most engaging performer of the young cast.

The map leads the boys (no girls are apparently qualified to join the club, although Kerri Green and Martha Plimpton will drop in as the cheerleader/love interest and her dorky girlfriend) to an abandoned restaurant near the ocean, where a gun-totin' big mama (the hilarious Anne Ramsey, sporting her trademark five o'clock shadow) and her crooked sons (including a hideously deformed creature nicknamed 'Sloth') are hiding out after a jail break. A grate in the fireplace leads the Goonies through tunnels and caves, past several booby traps (rigged

by One-Eye himself?), to a pirate ship stuffed to the masthead with gold and jewels. Even though Big Mama forces the kids to surrender all their loot before walking the plank, Mikey's marble bag turns up before fade-out, jammed with priceless stones. The Walsh family is saved! Sloth gets adopted! The reviewer regurgitates!

In the hands of a better writer, Spielberg's story might have made for an enjoyable two hours of fluff. But Columbus, still an inexperienced, unsteady talent, pays too much attention to cartoon violence and not enough to characterization. The kids aren't all that different from one another (except as 'types'), and there's no sense of reality about them: they come off like a bunch of TV sitcom brats.

Some of Columbus' ideas are cute—like making Ke Huy-Quan a walking swiss knife, with gadgets that backfire as often as not—but just about everything else is shrill and overdone; every scream gets *two* close-ups. Most distressing is Columbus' dialogue—at least the portion that is audible—the sound mix is the worst I have heard in a major film. The casual profanity, drug references, and fat jokes aimed at Jeff Cohen's grotesque 'Chunk' are bad enough, but I don't think I'm being prudish when I suggest that referring to Mikey as "limp lungs," or having one of the boys tease Chunk about having naked pictures of his mother taking a bath in his possession in order to get him mad enough to break down a locked door, isn't exactly responsible filmmaking.

Richard Donner, too, falls victim to Spielberg's hermetically sealed storyline. The opening jailbreak and ensuing car chase is briskly executed, and the film is as technically proficient as one has come to expect of a Spielberg production, but Donner comes off as little more than a hired gun here, perfunctorily doing a job. The poetry and heart that made LADYHAWKE so enjoyable is completely missing, replaced by a garish rat-a-tat-tat style that comes off like a frail attempt to copy Spielberg. To that end, Donner keeps everyone talking—no, *screaming*—at once, and his performers moving fast and furiously. Perhaps he thought that by distracting the audience, they would ignore the script's numerous deficiencies. But it would take a far more imaginative director than Donner to disguise this film's hollow center.

THE GOONIES does have its good elements: J. Michael Riva's bright production design, John Matuszak's gross but lovable "Sloth," the eerie makeup by Craig Reardon and the Burmans (which doesn't fare as well in broad daylight scenes on the beach), and a sweet moment wherein Sean Astin salutes One-Eyed Jack as the "first Goonie." But these virtues don't go very far in counteracting the sickening feeling one is left with when the film ends. That's what too many Reese's Pieces will do to you. □



# REVIEWS

## Max, forever alive in memory on the post-apocalyptic waste

### MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME

A Warner Bros. release. 6/85, 106 mins. In color. Directed by George Miller and George Ogilvie. Producer, George Miller. Director of photography, Dean Semler. Editor, Richard Francis-Bruce. Production designer, Graham Walker. Visual design consultant, Ed Vereaux.

Mad Max ..... Mel Gibson  
Aunty Entity ..... Tina Turner  
The Master ..... Angelo Rossitto  
Savannah Nix ..... Helen Buday  
Scrooloose ..... Rod Zuanic  
The Collector ..... Frank Thring  
Ironbar ..... Angry Anderson  
The Blaster ..... Paul Larsson  
Jedediah ..... Bruce Spence  
Jedediah Jr. .... Adam Cockburn

by Thomas Doherty

The ROAD WARRIOR was a landmark of world cinema, one of those handful of movies whose figures and fantasies become a permanent part of the cultural inheritance: Max, the Gyro Captain, the Feral Kid, Wez, and Lord Humongus forever alive in memory on the post-apocalyptic waste.

In Miller's mythopoetic pageant, Max acted the knightly champion astride the last of the V-8 interceptors, the "honorable man" of an old-fashioned morality play. Max's madness is plainly a response to past and a defense against future pain. ("What burnt you out, Max?" taunts the commune leader in THE ROAD WARRIOR, finally striking a nerve with "Lose some family?")

For all the chopped fingers,

crushed torsos, and squashed skulls, THE ROAD WARRIOR bespoke a deeply humanist sensibility that prized dignity, loyalty, and love (even the maniacal Wez mourns his punk lover, even the Lord Humongus keeps a picture of Mom in his weapons satchel). The roadway duels were contests of moral good first, motor skill second.

Veering from the breakneck rush of its predecessors, Part III moves unhurriedly, downshifting from the linear drive of ground-level propulsion to the leisurely grace of airborne flight. The opening shot announces the change in pace and perspective: a swooping, bird's-eye descent on a lone figure at the reins of a camel-drawn vehicle, stark against a landscape of lunar desolation. The high-flying viewpoint is that of the familiar Gyro Captain (Bruce Spence), now a marauding sky pilot, aided and abetted by a little squirt who can only be his son. The grounded prey, knocked off his perch and left bootless in Gaza, turns out to be Max.

Entering the bizarre bazaar of Bartertown, a frontier trading post ruled by a punk matriarch named Aunty Entity (Tina Turner) and peopled by a Felliniesque gallery of hyperthyroid cases, Max offers a display of deadly dexterity to the village customs agent, the Collector



Mad Max (Mel Gibson) versus Blaster (Paul Larsson) in a battle to the death in Thunderdome. Inset: Master, 34-inch high Angelo Rossitto, astride Blaster, rules the underworld pigshit powerstation that runs Bartertown.



(Frank Thring, a humanoid version of Jabba the Hut). He is quickly ushered into Aunty's chambers for another audition and some necessary exposition.

In the bowels of Bartertown reigns a symbiotic pair known as Masterblaster, a smart dwarf/strong dunce combo at the helm of a pig-powered public utility keeping Bartertown in gaudy neon. (Pig manure equals methane equals electricity—the Mad Max series, remember, springs out of the late-'70's fuel crunch.) Aunty cuts a deal

with Max to eliminate the behemoth lower half of Masterblaster, thus leaving her in control of the brains of the pigshit operation. Max and Blaster meet for mortal combat in Thunderdome, a geodesic-like cage serving as Bartertown's civic arena and hall of justice. ("Two men enter, one man leaves," is the community code, chanted by the assembly in their best ISLAND OF LOST SOULS timber.)

In the subsequent mano-a-mano, Miller and co-director George Ogilvie choreograph an exhilarating dance of death. While the crowd claws encouragement at cageside, the contestants career about the dome in harnesses (actually hand controlled bungee ropes powered by pressed air cylinders) and scramble for spear, hammer, and chainsaw. The sequence is shot in a swirling, hands-on style, the tense, jumbled editing duplicating Max's frightful loss of equilibrium and feverish desperation.

If the ultimate victor is no surprise, his refusal to deliver the coup de grace is: Blaster has the body of a brute, but the face of a little boy, and for ex-father Max, children are sacrosanct. A highly pissed off Aunty exiles the welcher to the

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## Mad Max Has Come A Long Way

The original MAD MAX (1980) lent a stylish, souped-up velocity to that bastard genre, the automotive western, but little about the savvy Australian entry into the speedway sweepstakes prepared one for the sheer controlled brilliance of its sequel, THE ROAD WARRIOR.

Where MAD MAX was merely well executed and bluntly entertaining in a drive-in Saturday way, THE ROAD WARRIOR (1982) was fully realized

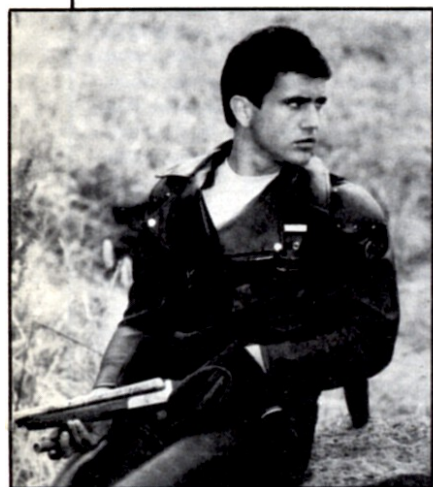
and downright wondrous, a masterpiece of image- and myth-making that unwound circles of meaning with each viewing. Not for nothing was the film conjured as an old man's vision, a tribal tale to be passed down through generations.

With MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME, the series becomes a mature trilogy, and Mel Gibson becomes a credible successor to Clint Eastwood, both hero to boys and heartthrob to girls. Dressed in the latest Bedouin fashion and tressed in long, biblical locks streaked with grey, Max looks more like an Old Testament prophet than the leather-clad, battle scarred war god last seen dominating the

Gibson as Mad Max III.



smokey blacktop from the Feral Kid's receding widescreen vantage. Fifteen years later, in a post-nuke world that has progressed from savagery to barbarism, the middle-aged Max seems mellow, less warrior than wanderer. **T.D.**



A youthful Mel Gibson as Max Rockatansky in MAD MAX (1980).



## A striking blend of horror and SF traditions

### LIFEFORCE

A Tri-Star Pictures release. 6/85. 101 mins. In color. Director, Tobe Hooper. Produced by Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus. Director of photography, Alan Hume. Editor, John Grover. Production designer, John Graysmark. Art directors, Alan Tomkins, Bob Cartwright, Tony Reading, Terry Knight. Special makeup effects, Nick Maley. Special effects, John Gant. Special visual effects, John Dykstra. Screenplay by Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby, based on Colin Wilson's "Space Vampires."

Carlsen	Steve Railsback
Caine	Peter Firth
Fallada	Frank Finlay
Space Girl	Mathilda May
Dr. Armstrong	Patrick Stewart
Bukovsky	Michael Gothard
Derebridge	Nicholas Ball
Sir Percy	Aubrey Morris

by Brooks Landon

LIFEFORCE, a picture with obvious ties to both ALIEN and THE THING—as well as debts to Hammer's "Quartermass" films, provides a striking blend of horror and SF traditions, as it rationalizes vampire myths as the result of intergalactic imperialism by man-sized, gargoyle-shaped aliens.

These space vampires can assume human form or can abandon their

bodies entirely, moving from one possessed human mind to the next. After long absence, three surviving vampires have returned to earth to feed not on human blood, but on the very essence of life, the "lifeforce." Even more insidiously, the female alien, ethereally played by Mathilda May, poses a special challenge to astronaut Tom Carlsen (Steve Railsback), whose shuttle mission discovers the three apparently human bodies in a vast bio-gothic spaceship hidden in the coma of Halley's Comet. May forms herself into the perfect woman of Railsback's dreams, thus forcing him to try to overcome, as she explains, "the feminine" in his own mind. Railsback's performance, unsettlingly hysterical even for him (HELTER SKELTER, THE STUNT MAN), makes more and more sense as the movie unfolds, but remains one of LIFEFORCE's many curiosities, even when the cause of his obsession is finally revealed.

What is certain is that director

Tobe Hooper wanted a "big" film and got it. From the sense of vastness of its opening space shots to the devastation of London in its final scenes, this movie reflects the talent and experience of its superb production team. Hooper wanted a compressed film, rapidly paced, and LIFEFORCE is that with a gleeful vengeance, racing toward its apocalyptic ending with never a moment's relief. Every scene, every shot, every word of dialogue inexorably hurls the film forward, giving it a relentless intensity and edginess surpassing that even of Hooper's TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE. More importantly, and whether Hooper wanted it or not, LIFEFORCE displays a sensibility so odd, so unfamiliar, that it may be the most subtly original SF film in recent memory.

Indeed, LIFEFORCE may be too original for its own good. Consider what this movie *does not* have. In a period when the SF film seems to have been staked out as the hottest

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Carlsen (Steve Railsback) falls under the spell of space vampire Mathilda May.

## Roger Moore gets bested by 'Amazing Grace' and a bad script

### A VIEW TO A KILL

An MGM/UA release. 5/85. 131 mins. In color. Director, John Glen. Produced by Albert R. Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson. Screenplay by Richard Maibaum and Michael G. Wilson. Associate producer, Thomas Pevsner. Music composed and conducted by John Barry. Production designer, Peter Lamont. Director of photography, Alan Hume. Editor, Peter Davis. Title song performed by Duran Duran.

James Bond	Roger Moore
Max Zorin	Christopher Walken
Stacey Sutton	Tanya Roberts
May Day	Grace Jones
Tibbett	Patrick Macnee
Scarpine	Patrick Bauchau
Chuck Lee	David Yip
Pola Ivanova	Fiona Fullerton

by David J. Hogan

A VIEW TO A KILL may be the most schizophrenic of all the James Bond adventures. Director John Glen creates a couple of grandiose set pieces that rank with the best of the entire series, but undercuts them with other moments that look like outtakes from Burt Reynolds movies, or unfunny reprises of old Hollywood comedies. As failed slapstick gives way to unrelieved sadism, we don't know whether to groan or gasp. Roger Moore, in his seventh appearance as Bond, gives us no clue; he's a neutral presence who strides through the film with all the urgency of an untroubled man in search of his opera box. Moore appears more fit here than in OCTOPUSSY (1983), but he really hasn't the edge that the character requires. He has promised for some

time to leave the series; he should take himself at his word. We need a tougher, younger Bond.

The plot of A VIEW TO A KILL, as in most of the Bonds, is almost unimportant. This one is sillier than most, with psychotic, Nazi-bred industrialist Max Zorin (Christopher Walken) intent upon cornering the world microchip market by triggering the San Andreas Fault and flooding California's Silicon Valley. Zorin is ably assisted by May Day (the amazing Grace Jones), an angular black beauty who is as fierce as she is striking.

Bond allies himself with Sir Godfrey Tibbett (a chunky but game Patrick Macnee), and oil heiress Stacey Sutton (Tanya Roberts), who is one of Zorin's chief obstacles.

As written by Bond veterans Richard Maibaum and Michael G. Wilson, this is the stuff of good, improbable fun. But it doesn't come off. Why does longtime Bond producer Cubby Broccoli insist upon screwing up his movies with infantile humor? The world ponders. This time, we get that familiar queasy feeling just a few minutes into the teaser, which is yet another

of Willy Bogner's well-staged but (by now) boring ski chases. We've seen these snowy stunts in so many other Bond pictures that our *deja vu* is experiencing *deja vu*. (If the filmmakers really want to startle us in the opening of the next adventure, they should have Bond jogging at 3 a.m. in the South Bronx, or take a ride on the NYC subway.)

Anyway, after Bond blows up a Soviet snowmobile and slides off down the slope on one runner, John Barry's apropos music fades and is replaced by The Beach Boys' "California Girls." Like Bond is surfing, get it? Everyone in the theatre seemed to edge toward the exits, and it was unpleasantly clear that the tough intelligence of 1981's FOR YOUR EYES ONLY—by far the best of the Roger Moore Bond pictures—was a fluke.

A cleverly staged chase atop the Eiffel Tower is followed by an eye-filling visit to the haunts of the European superrich, as Bond and Sir Godfrey assume false identities and visit Max Zorin at his huge estate. The importance of location scouts and fat Bondian budgets is obvious here; Zorin's estate makes the DYNASTY digs look like Levittown.

Subsequent incidents range from the uninspired (big luffs at a clandestine assembly line) to a mildly exciting steeplechase. The film's most

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Bond (Roger Moore) fights Zorin (Christopher Walken) in the exciting, Hitchcock-inspired climax of A VIEW TO A KILL, set atop San Francisco's Golden Gate bridge.





## Randy Cook on the makeup effects of FRIGHT NIGHT

By Marc Shapiro

Vampires and bats have been horror film staples since NOSFERATU (1922) and, consequently, have become familiar assignments for special effects people. It has long since passed the stage when bats on a string and snap-in fangs cut the mustard for discriminating audiences, so Randall William Cook faced a bit of a challenge when he was picked to do the prosthetic design, sculpture and bat effects on FRIGHT NIGHT.

Cook, who created the makeup effects for The Boss Film Corporation, is holding court this day in a noisy parking lot at the special effects shop in Santa Monica, California. The reason for the outdoor setting is that some of the special effects for the upcoming POLTERGEIST II are being completed inside and to say that people are security conscious at this stage is an understatement.

Cook has done stop-motion effects on a number of films including LASERBLAST, GHOSTBUSTERS, Q, and THE CRATER LAKE MONSTER and was more than capable of adding that kind of animation to FRIGHT NIGHT's small flying bat and the monstrous offspring that appears near the film's end. Stop-motion wasn't used because the filmmakers ruled it out.

"The film company said before shooting began that they did not want stop-motion effects used," said Cook. "They wanted us to use marionettes because it was felt it would be more time and cost effective. But, considering all the man hours that went into making the marionette bat, I don't agree."

"What you've seen in most vampire

**Makeup co-supervisor Randy Cook inspects the finger extensions of Chris Sarandon's bat-like makeup.**



**Cook's design for Amanda Bearse-turned-vampire was intended to be used as a quick shock cut, but director Tom Holland ended-up featuring it extensively.**

films are these bouncing marionette bats on strings that look and perform exactly like what they are and are not very convincing," he continued. "The challenge was to come up with a marionette bat that would flap its wings convincingly and with a sense of power without doing something like dropping the bat and yanking on strings to create movement."

Cook said the flight of the giant bat was accomplished by filming the marionette at super slow speed, one frame per second, which looked just right when projected normally at 24 frames per second.

"By doing it that way, we were able to get a lot of solidity of arm movement and good wing follow through," he said. "Had I been able to use stop-motion, the bat's flight could have been better than what it turned out to be. We could have had it crashing into walls and all kinds of action. But, all things considered, I think what we came up with turned out all right."

FRIGHT NIGHT proved a departure of sorts for Cook as it allowed him, for the first time, to do some major prosthetic makeup work; most notably the vampire makeup on actor Chris Sarandon. Cook admits that the ideas behind this particular effect were not totally original.

"Basically I stole the idea from John Barrymore's DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE," said Cook. "Everything done makeup-wise in that film, including finger extensions, was so subtle and effective that it seemed to me that was the right way to go. Tom Holland was very much affected by NOSFERATU so we were pretty much in agreement on how the vampire should look."

The result of these ideas and skull sessions with fellow monster maker Steve Johnson and visual effects art director John Bruno arrived at a

makeup that was a striking cross between Sarandon's features and the previously sculpted giant bat.

Molds of vampire actor Chris Sarandon's hands were made so that makeup artists could create the dozens of finger extensions that the vampire wears throughout the film. Full and partial masks were created for Sarandon's transition into an increasingly bat-like appearance.

"At the time I was creating the makeup, no actor had yet been cast," said Cook. "I had to reverse the normal process and create the bat with an eye toward the direction the makeup of the actor would take. Fortunately actor Chris Sarandon has the type of pronounced features that made the whole process easier."

Not so easy and, by Cook's estimation, not completely successful was a last minute effects curve Holland threw Cook just prior to the major effects blitz at the conclusion of the film. "Holland wanted this terrifying fanged mouth for actress Amanda Bearse that he said would

only be seen as one quick cut for a fraction of a second," said Cook. "So I threw a kind of built-up toothpaste ad mouth together in a couple of days. That mouth ended up being used in five different shots."

"I was a little embarrassed by it," Cook continued. "It doesn't really play the way it was intended. I would have taken more than a couple of days with it if I had known it was going to be visible for more than a fraction of a second."

Easily the most arresting effects sequence in FRIGHT NIGHT is the death of Evil Ed and his transformation from werewolf back to boy. Handling this sequence was Steve Johnson who, through work on THE HOWLING and AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, has become a veteran of beast makeup and hidden moving bladders.

As Evil Ed, dying, changes from a wolf back into actor Stephen Geoffreys, the sequence begins with a full-sized wolf puppet. The puppet was wired to move across the stage floor, and appliances on Geoffreys simulated the various stages of the transformation effect. Johnson pushed the now all too familiar transformation scenes a step further, according to Cook, who was present when these scenes were shot.

"Stylistically it was a definite step forward. In previous films, that sort of scene was shot as a show-stopping 'okay we're going to transform somebody' kind of thing. On FRIGHT NIGHT the approach was different in that the scene was done almost completely with cuts rather than one continuous scene. It flowed real well and didn't distract from the progress of the story."

Cook concluded by laughingly recalling some of the jobs he'd done over the years to break into the field. He cringed at the memory of the storyboard work he did for Disney on HERBIE GOES TO MONTE CARLO and claims that his experience on Q is a long sad story not worth rehashing.

"And then there was the time I painted rubber gorilla butts on the film KING KONG," laughed Cook. "For a long time that was the high point of my career."

"Fortunately now it isn't." □

**Makeup co-supervisor Steve Johnson (right) with mechanized werewolf head. The controls are demonstrated by Billy Bryan (left), who played the Marshmallow Man in GHOSTBUSTERS, and chief makeup technician Mark B. Wilson (center).**





## Resurrects Gothic chills of the bygone days of Hammer/AIP

### FRIGHT NIGHT

A Columbia Pictures release. 7/85, 105 mins. In color. Director, Tom Holland. Producer, Herb Jaffe. Editor, Kent Beyda. Director of photography, Jan Kiesser. Production designer, John De Cuir Jr. Associate producer, Jerry A. Baerwitz. Sound, Don Rush. Visual effects, Richard Edlund.

Charley Brewster	William Ragsdale
Jerry Dandrige	Chris Sarandon
Peter Vincent	Roddy McDowall
Amy Peterson	Amanda Bearse
Evil Ed	Stephen Geoffreys
Billy Cole	Jonathan Stark
Judy Brewster	Dorothy Fielding
Det. Lennox	Art J. Evans

by Kyle Counts

FRIGHT NIGHT did modest business at the box office this summer and proved to be entertaining romp in the Saturday matinee tradition. Its success on even this modest level marks it as one of the better genre films of the season. Making the leap from writer to director, Tom Holland playfully resurrects the Gothic chills of the old Hammer/American International Pictures in an updated, boy-who-cried-wolf format, and does so with humor and a genuine feel for those Sturm-und-Fang minorworks. Even though riddled with plot holes and slow-going at times, the film delivers in the big moments, and wins you over with its anxious-to-please, grand finale.

Charley is just your average horny-and-failing-trigonometry teenager (so why does he walk around in suit jackets?), with a curiosity not unlike that of James Stewart in REAR WINDOW (he even owns a pair of binoculars). And like Stewart's character in the Hitchcock classic, his spying gets him kneedeep in trouble. He sees to much—like his neighbors carrying a filled-to-capacity body bag out of the house one night—and instinctively knows that the fangs and elongated fingers his neighbor sports are not of this Earth. But the price he pays for being a 17 year-old kid with an active imagination means that no one—not mom, not girlfriend and certainly not the local police—takes his tales of the "sleeping undead" seriously. (As Charley, Ragsdale manages to pull off the difficult task of playing the role straight-faced quite impressively.)

Oh well, Charley reasons, as long as he's protected by a gold cross—provided by his skeptical nerd of a pal, Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys, in a performance so hysterical and unfocused that it seems to belong to another movie)—and keeps garlic handy, he's got nothing to worry about. Unless, of course, the vampire gains access to him by—so the legend says—being invited into his house by the "rightful owner." Cut to mom, calling Charley downstairs to



Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys) changes from vampire (left) to werewolf. Steve Johnson built the mechanized werewolf body (right).

meet the new neighbor, Jerry Dandrige (Chris Sarandon, doing a surprisingly authoritative turn as the lusty creature of the night), a suave and fashionably dressed (lots of grays and blood-reds), er, lady-killer who makes it clear to Charley that he will see him again... real soon.

And visit again he does—that same night, in a scene that kicks the movie into high gear, however briefly. Whistling a casual refrain of "Strangers in the Night," Dandrige enters Charley's room and grabs him by the throat (note the inserts of Charley's feet kicking helplessly; Holland continues to emulate the Hitchcock touch), tossing him like a rag doll through the doors of his closet.

Charley turns for help to Peter Vincent (Roddy McDowall), a has-been actor-turned-late-night TV host (of "Fright Night Theatre") who professes—on his show, at least—to be a "great vampire killer." Vincent has just been kicked off the air due to declining ratings (young people today prefer movies about "demented mad men in ski masks hacking up young virgins," he hisses). This broken-down Cowardly Lion role would seem tailor-made for McDowall, but there isn't enough cleverness in the concept of the character to make it more than just another wimp-who-rises-to-the occasion transformation. Still, McDowall has fun with the part's theatrical hamminess.

When Dandrige takes a liking to Amy, who reminds him of a girl he used to know "a long time ago," he kidnaps her at a crowded disco where she and Charley have taken refuge. Their dance and seduction borders on a parody of SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, but it illustrates Holland's idea that the vampire is a metaphor for seduction.

Charley and Vincent then join forces for a showdown with Mr. Fangs and his "live-in carpenter roommate," Billy Cole (Jonathan Stark, doing wonders with a bit part).

While Holland shows a certain flair behind the camera (his point-of-view, vampire-to-bat shots, aided by the Louma crane camera, are imaginative, and expertly handled by cinematographer Jan Kiesser), and the film is witty on a visual level, his dialogue is surprisingly flat and thick with exposition. All things considered, if it wasn't for the pull-out-the-stops last half-hour—Evil Ed transforms into a wolf and back again, Billy Cole decomposes into a zombie, Dandrige metamorphoses into a bat, and Amy into a sort of she-beast—the film would be a dud.

But the climax is where FRIGHT NIGHT shines: the effects by the Boss Film Corporation, supervised by John Bruno, may occasionally be a bit too POLTERGEISTish (and some, like Ed's transformation/death from wolf to human form, are lingered on for far too long), but they

are largely first rate. The makeup by Randy Cook and Steve Johnson is appropriately gruesome and disturbing, even outlandishly funny at points (the she-beast's Joker-sized mouth) and the bat creature, second cousin to the Terror Dogs of GHOSTBUSTERS, works well, especially in the shot where it flies down the hallway of the house knocking over a vase. Don Rush's sound work also deserves praise—I've still got the willies from the whimpering death rattle made by Evil Ed's wolf incarnation.

In the (happy) end, Vincent returns to "Fright Night Theatre" (though it's never explained what the connection is between his dime-store heroics and the show's sudden renewal) and we find Charley and Amy back to their backseat shenanigans. (But wait: what's that set of glowing eyes in the window next door?) "Is something wrong?" Amy asks her main squeeze. Charley, wise to this type of thing by now, insists that it's nothing. Or is it the dreaded sequel, waiting in the wings? □

Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale) and vampire Jerry Dandrige (Chris Sarandon).





## Tale of love, grace & aging leaves viewers in 'happy daze'

### COCOON

A 20th Century Fox release. 6/85, 117 mins. In color. Director, Ron Howard. Produced by Richard D. Zanuck, David Brown, Lili Fini Zanuck. Director of photography, Don Peterman. Production designer, Jack T. Collis. Special visual effects by I.M. Visual effects supervisor, Ken Ralston. Special creatures and effects, Greg Cannom. Cocoon and dolphin effects, Robert Short Productions. Screenplay by Tom Benedek, based on a novel by David Saperstein.

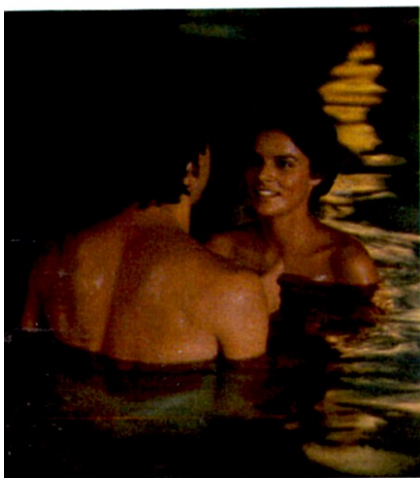
Art Selwyn	Don Ameche
Ben Luckett	Wilford Brimley
Joe Finley	Hume Cronyn
Walter	Brian Dennehy
Bernie Lefkowitz	Jack Gifford
Jack Bonner	Steve Guttenberg
Mary Luckett	Maureen Stapleton
Alma Finley	Jessica Tandy
Bess McCarthy	Gwen Verdon
Rose Lefkowitz	Herta Ware
Kitty	Tahnee Welch
Pillsbury	Tyrone Power Jr.
Doc	Mike Nomad

by Steve Dimeo

What a heyday for fantasy films! Since 1980 E.T. has sparked a revival of fantasies that not only entertain but also show us something about love, death and ourselves. While Bob Zemeckis and Steven Spielberg have done that beautifully this past summer by [time] shifting us back to the past in *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, Ron Howard's *COCOON* steeps us wonderfully in the problems of the present, particularly those of love and age. In each case the apparent "losers" win out *ROCKY*-style at the end, gaining wisdom and fulfillment. Both films are examples of cinema at its best, and should be well-represented come Academy Award nomination time next year.

*COCOON*'s special strengths aren't so much in its story, which as an annoying though forgivable

Alien Tahnee Welch shows Steve Guttenberg the joys of not touching.



The superb, ensemble cast: back row (l to r), Wilford Brimley, Tahnee Welch, Maureen Stapleton, Brian Dennehy, Steve Guttenberg, Jack Gifford, Tyrone Power, Jr., Don Ameche, Mike Nomad; front, Herta Ware, Hume Cronyn, Jessica Tandy, director Ron Howard, Gwen Verdon, producers Lili and Richard Zanuck.

glitch toward the end, as they are in the character acting which, but for one unimportant case, is brilliant. Thanks here obviously has to go to another young actor turned director, formerly of TV's *HAPPY DAYS*, who is clearly sensitive to the needs and potential of his actors—and this despite the fact that most members of his cast are more than double his 32 years. Following *SPLASH*, *COCOON* marks Ron Howard as one of the genre's finest directors.

After a too slow half-hour of setting the stage, Howard follows three restive rest home residents—Hume Cronyn, Wilford Brimley and Don Ameche—as they happen onto a swimming pool where aliens disguised as humans (led by Brian Dennehy) have stored the dormant cocoons of friends stranded on Earth thousands of years ago. The pool has been energized to bring the aliens back to life, but the spillover of the life energy also brings the elderly humans back to life in another way altogether. The problem is keeping their newfound youthfulness to themselves—and when the source of their vigor slips out in the cafeteria one day, they unwittingly imperil the lives of the creatures in the cocoons.

That's where screenwriter Tom Benedek, working from a story by David Saperstein, makes a slight error in logic. The presence of so many people from the rest home in the pool saps the energy, a fact that should have been foreshadowed earlier in the same skillful way important plot information was telegraphed to us in *BACK TO THE FUTURE*. But this detail is at least acceptable.

After Dennehy, whose race has never known death, coddles a withered old friend inside one cocoon in a remarkably moving scene (considering he's only cradling a mechanized dummy), Dennehy decides to con-

sign the rest of the cocoons back to the ocean to be retrieved at some future time. In an untimely burst of beneficence, he offers to take home a boatload of old humans instead, bestowing upon them the gift of eternal life. If Dennehy had that much room in his spaceship, and had enough magical power to levitate and heal *à la* E.T. and *STARMAN*, why couldn't he have also taken the cocoons aboard and brought his own kind back to life while en route back home?

Be that as it may, the story, adding suspense and tenderness in ways comparable to *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, finds some of the oldsters hitching a ride and others staying behind for reasons that make this much more than a cute clone of *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* (1977), a film more seminal than innately satisfying as this one.

One of the major reasons *COCOON* is much more satisfying is the acting. Demands aren't as considerable, of course, in the case of the subplot concerning Steve Guttenberg, the captain of a boat the aliens charter to retrieve the pods, who falls in love with Tahnee Welch even after she doffs more than her clothes to reveal a pretty disconcerting inner light. Guttenberg plays the humor broadly and neurotically but seems strained when compared with the more natural acting of the veterans director Howard has assembled.

And the talents they display are simply unsurpassed. That includes even Brian Dennehy who is surprisingly low-keyed and tender, belying the image he projected as "heavies" in earlier films. The acting among these veterans is ensemble acting at its most sublime—so good, in fact, it's really hard to isolate outstanding performances since each really plays off all the rest for success. But as with

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## 'Project' gets an honorable mention but no blue ribbon

### MY SCIENCE PROJECT

A Disney release of a Touchstone Film. 8/85, 94 mins. In color. Written and directed by Jonathan Betuel. Producer, Jonathan Taplin. Director of photography, David M. Walsh. Editor, Timothy O'Meara. Production designer, David L. Snyder. Art director, John B. Mansbridge. Visual effects supervisor, John Scheele. Set decorator, Jerry Wunderlich.

Michael Harlan	John Stockwell
Ellie Sawyer	Danielle Von Zerneke
Vince Latello	Fisher Stevens
Sherman	Raphael Sbarge
Bob Roberts	Dennis Hopper
Lew Harlan	Barry Corbin
Dolores	Ann Wedgeworth
Detective Nulty	Richard Masur

by Bill Kelley

If *MY SCIENCE PROJECT* doesn't quite sink to the depths reached by the other teen/mad scientist movies of last summer, it's not for lack of trying, nearly every time this latest bust from Disney's Touchstone Films seems on the verge of doing something original, it stops the show to introduce a new tidbit of gross-out, high school humor or advance its hopelessly trite romantic subplot.

Ironically, the film contains more provocative genre elements than *WEIRD SCIENCE* and *REAL GENIUS* combined. The premise has a high school underachiever, Mike (John Stockwell of *CHRISTINE*), unearth what turns out to be the generator of a UFO from a desolate Army dumping ground. (The film opens with an amusing, played-straight sequence in which, 30 years earlier, President Eisenhower ordered the UFO dismantled and its parts buried.) After a protracted buildup, enhanced by some superb, often subtle special effects (and stalled by the love interest, and a grotesque subplot involving Mike's father and his lustful new "bride"), a reluctant Mike and his science teacher (Dennis Hopper) connect the gizmo to the town power supply and the heavens open up to release a spectacular time warp.

You've got to ignore—and forgive—a lot to get anything out of this film, but if you stick with it, it does have some virtues. On the down side, there is the decision to cast Stockwell, the epitome of blond, clean-cut Middle America, as a greaseball car mechanic who is maddeningly inarticulate and wears the same dingy t-shirt (and unwashed face) throughout the film. Still worse is Fisher Stevens as his foul-mouthed pal, Vince, who looks and sounds like he stepped from that

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## Behind-the-scenes of MY SCIENCE PROJECT effects

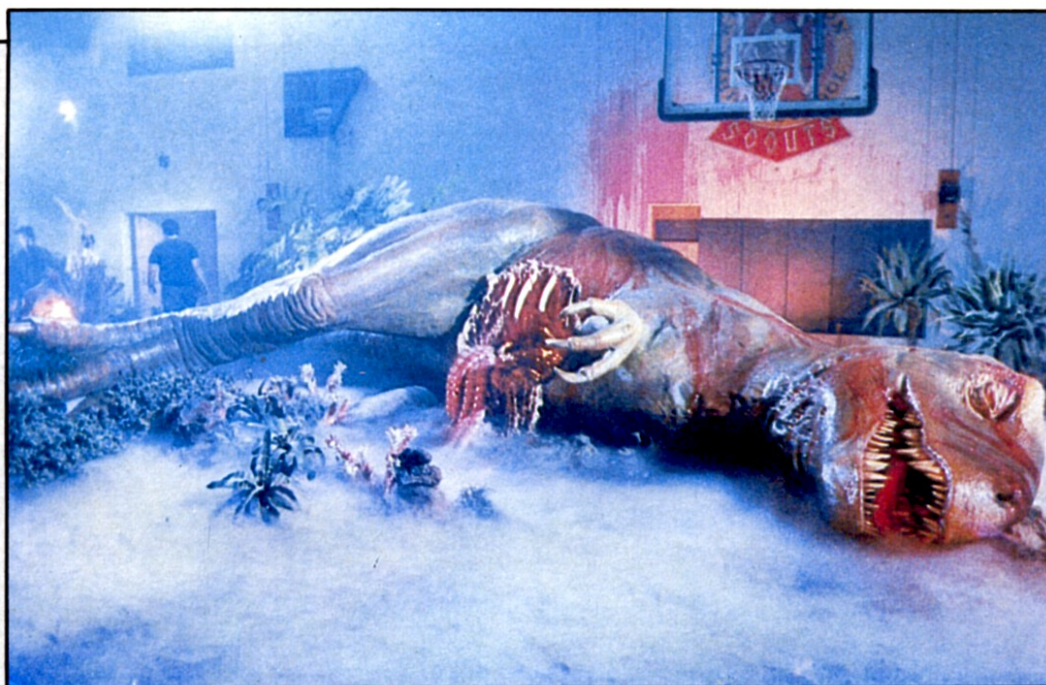
By Mike Mayo

First-time director Jonathan Betuel wanted a Tyrannosaurus Rex to be one of the highlights of his time warp adventure, MY SCIENCE PROJECT. Betuel wanted a mean, lively, and snarlingly realistic dinosaur that could be done quicker than stop-motion. That meant using some sort of puppet, but nothing like you could get from the five-and-dime. The creature would have to be custom built and its half-million dollar estimate was said to have caused at least one studio to pass on the project. Even Disney tried to get Betuel to consider a man-in-a-suit, such as the studio used on BABY, but Betuel was adamant. The dinosaur had to be done right!

Getting the dinosaur right was also of special concern to the film's effects supervisor and dinosaur buff John Scheele, who's been preparing for the film, in a manner of speaking, almost since he was old enough to walk. At the tender age of three Scheele became a dinosaur hunter, going out with his father, William Scheele, the 30 year director of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, to roam the west looking for dinosaur bones. Later, Scheele considered going into paleontology, but wound up seduced away by film.

Scheele offered the Tyrannosaurus assignment to Rick Baker, but Baker preferred to serve only as a consultant. "He didn't want the hassle of supervising it or handling the crews," said Scheele. Doug Beswick, who worked with Baker on STAR WARS, was hired to make the armature and mechanics for the dinosaur and used many of Baker's staff on the project.

"We decided to use a rod and cable puppet for the dinosaur," said Beswick. "Cables were used for every function except the legs, which we operated on rods. They were loose jointed legs with 1/4" rods coming out



A stationary 30-foot mockup of the Tyrannosaurus built by the Disney effects department using parts leftover from BABY.

of the feet that contained three cables to move the toes. We could walk the puppet and bend the toes at the same time."

Beswick built a rough mockup of the puppet, which was cut from foam and glued over a loosely jointed aluminum skeleton. "We used that to determine which joints had to be tight and which had to be loose to get the proper action," said Beswick. "After a month of tests we started building the real puppet."

Tom Hester sculpted the puppet using oil based clay, working 12 to 14 hours a day to finish it in two weeks. Tim Lawrence made Ultracal molds of the sculpt from which Tony Gardner cast all the foam pieces while Phil Naterio and Beswick designed the mechanics. Naterio did most of the machining, while Beswick coordinated everything.

"We built the entire creature in just 17 weeks," said Beswick, who finished the assignment a week ahead of schedule. "It's got 36 cables

coming out of it with a pneumatic breathing device and two joints on the tail with 12 cables on it alone so you can get it to whip around just like a real tail. Seven people operated it and the most difficult task was actually making it walk. The whole thing weighs 40 pounds, which was heavy to hold for the walking. We also had to make sure that the dinosaur hit its mark just like a regular actor, otherwise it would be out of focus."

Other than the Tyrannosaurus, the teen heroes of the film find themselves facing a cornucopia of nasties dreamed up by Betuel, Scheele and others. The filmmakers had enough left in the budget to play around a little, and storyboarded a lot of ideas, but a lot of the inspirations remain unseen in the final cut.

"Essentially we made an open casting call for creatures," said Scheele. "We were looking for twenty things from which we'd cull two or three. We had a four-armed

alien warrior by Lance Anderson that was going to be killed trying to burst through a wall. We shot it and it was good, but editor Tim O'Meara said we really didn't need it.

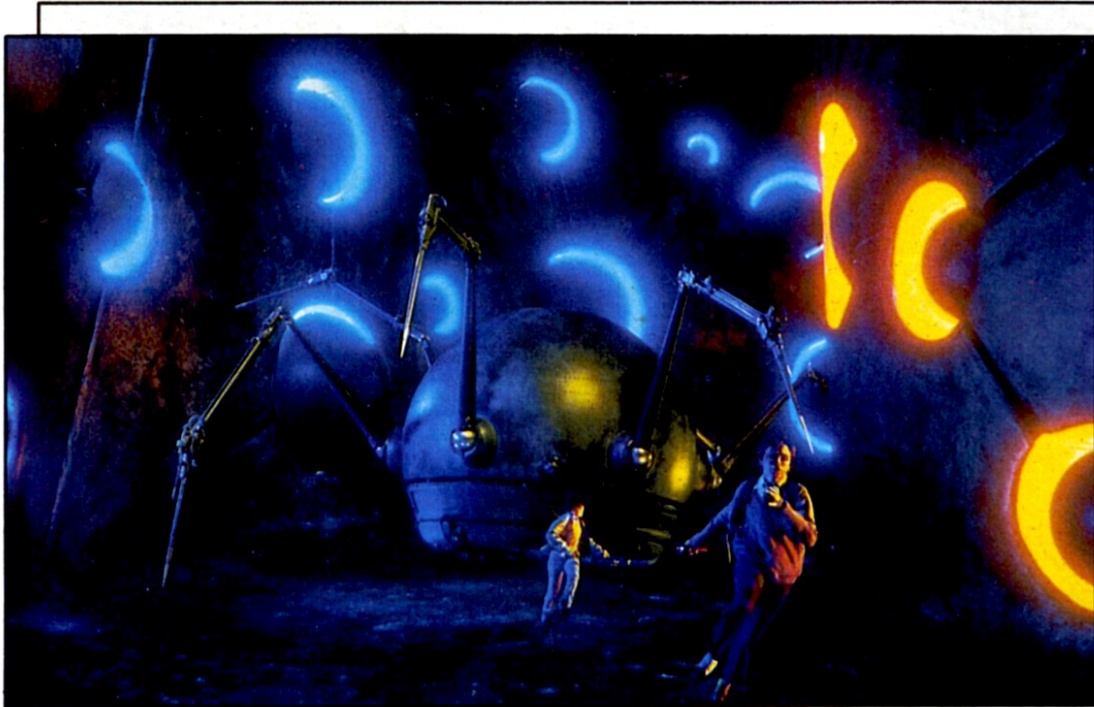
"We also cut a bunch of aliens that Chris Walas designed for us," continued Scheele. "We intended these things to be background details, and when we photographed them, we found out they stood out more than we expected, so we wanted to thin things out. We wanted to work up to the dinosaur scenes, and the other incidents were just diluting the impact. We were going to have a scene where the warp eats away part of the floor and they look down into this wierd space with strange alien props."

First time director Jonathan Betuel is delighted with the film's effects. "I really think our T-Rex is the best dinosaur so far in pictures," he said. "It has the grace and poetic nuance that takes you across the line into believability." □

Left: Armature-maker Ted Rae and Tyrannosaurus supervisor Doug Beswick work on the mechanics. Middle: effects supervisor John Scheele with Beswick's 1/4 scale rod and cable actuated puppet. Right: Filming the puppet on a miniature set of the high school gymnasium. Smoke obscured prescored rod tracks on the set.







A stop-motion spider robot animated by Tony Laudati at ILM chases the explorers on the alien ship, shot blue screen.

**EXPLORERS complex visual effects by Industrial Light & Magic**

Director Joe Dante saw his challenge with EXPLORERS as trying "to keep from making [the film] like every other space movie." Dante succeeded with a vengeance. For makeup effects he sought the highly original work of Rob Bottin (see sidebar, page 57), and for visual effects relied on the experts at Industrial Light and Magic.

"Joe Dante was very open to suggestions and in collaborating with us in the visual effects," said Bruce Nicholson, who is the supervisor of operations at ILM. Nicholson is part of the original STAR WARS team, who worked in optical printing. "Other directors are not so open to suggestions; they come to us with their ideas firmly set. Dante

remained ready and willing to change the script if we needed changes."

Nicholson and his team—which is spearheaded by director of visual effects photography Don Dow, visual effects art director Nilo Rodis, matte painting supervisor Michael Pangrazio, model shop supervisor Ease Oweyung and animation supervisor Bruce Walters—all agree that the most difficult visual in EXPLORERS was the creation of an invisible energy force, nicknamed "The Bubble Effect."

"Once the storyboards are drawn, it is up to me to decide what to do with the effects concept," said Dow. "For several scenes, we wanted to create an invisible bubble that could

hold an object or a person, an energy force that did not look outlandish or garish, but would be subtle enough to blend with the story. After all, we were dealing with a story about kids in a realistic situation, so the effects couldn't be overpowering."

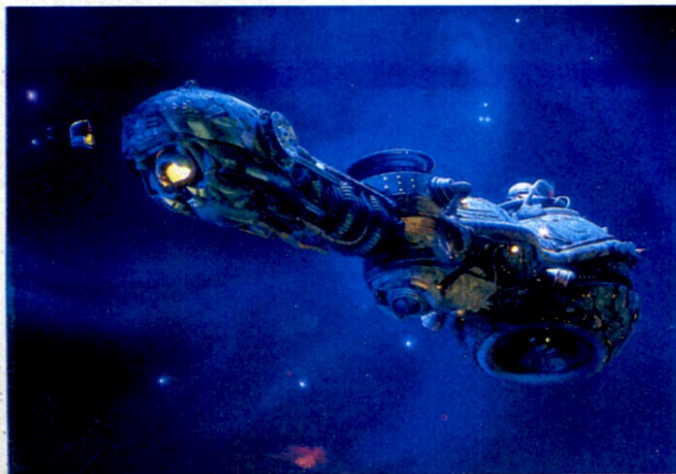
"How do you picture that which is invisible?" added Rodis, who came up with the concept of the invisible "bubble," tinted slightly bluer than its surrounding space, with a distorted image as background to emphasize the bubble, forming a complete circle of distortion without appearing to be a fake ring around whatever floated within.

"At all times we tried to remain faithful to the screenplay and to the director's goals," said Rodis. "What we all appreciated was the challenge Dante gave us when he dropped the script off with us to get our ideas. He did not treat us as an insert factory, but wanted our input on the special effects, including the visualization of the interior of the spaceship."

Nicholson has great pride in the work Dow did in photographing the various elements for the bubble sequence when it had to be photographed in daylight outside of a controlled indoor set. Besides the bubble visual, Nicholson supervised effects for three dream sequences featuring the computer animation of Omnibus Computer Graphics, stop motion "spider effects" and complex footage of the explorers' spaceship.

Though ILM's effects for the picture represented some of the most dazzling work yet seen this year, outstanding special effects weren't enough for audiences to forgive Dante's oddball approach. □

The alien ship—a detailed three foot miniature built at ILM by Bill George—production designer Robert Boyle's idea of a souped-up interstellar dragster.



*Dante finds in-jokes not enough to keep 'em laughing*

**EXPLORERS**

A Paramount Pictures release. 7/85, 109 mins. In color and Dolby stereo. Director, Joe Dante. Produced by Edward S. Feldman and David Bombsky. Written by Eric Luke. Executive producer, Michael Finnell. Director of photography, John Hora. Production designer, Robert F. Boyle. Edited by Tina Hirsch. Special makeup effects, Rob Bottin. Visual effects by ILM. Visual effects supervisor, Bruce Nicholson. Art director, Frank Richwood.

Ben Crandall	.....	Ethan Hawke
Wolfgang Muller	.....	River Phoenix
Darren Woods	.....	Jason Presson
Lori Swenson	.....	Amanda Peterson
Charlie Drake	.....	Dick Miller
Wak/Starkiller	.....	Robert Picardo
Neek	.....	Leslie Ricker

by Bruce Crouchet

Hidden deep within the amorphous jumble that is EXPLORERS is the potential for a truly classic film. With this story of boyhood comradery and adolescent longing, director Joe Dante taps into the collective unconscious of every precocious outcast who ever yearned for the stars and the means to reach them, yet it is Dante's own persistent idiosyncrasies as a filmmaker that prove this movie's eventual undoing. Unable—or perhaps unwilling—to make the most of a workable theme, the director typically forsakes solid narrative for his trademark in-jokes and obscure allusions as if such digressions, by themselves, could provide plot enough or energy enough to fuel a feature film.

EXPLORERS concerns itself with three friends, misfits all, who first hear the call to adventure in recurring dreams that are, unbeknownst to the neophyte spacers, telepathic cryptograms beamed

The explorers' scrap ship takes off, an ILM miniature shot enhanced by Sean Joyce's nicely atmospheric matte art.





directly into their minds by ETs who feel that the time has come for a face-to-face First Contact. Realizing that the dream images are actually circuit board diagrams, the youths assemble a device that emits a controllable, inertia-free force bubble. Armed with the ultimate motive device, it isn't long before they find themselves hurtling into deep space towards a close encounter unlike any they had anticipated.

Initially, EXPLORERS seems touched with something like magic. The opening scene in which young Ethan Hawke soars like a hightech Peter Pan over computer-generated dreamscapes is itself the stuff of dreams, engendering anticipation in the very audience it will soon utterly disappoint. To its credit, the movie does make an attempt to lay the groundwork for some honest character development. But it is here, where it tries hardest, that the film fails most dismally, with its marginal acting, flat dialogue, and a pace that drops to zero before the film is twenty minutes old.

Amazingly, screenwriter Eric Luke's characters degenerate into caricatures even as he tries to embellish them with some humanity: Hawke, the wide-eyed dreamer, reminds one of an adolescent Doug Henning, his every line a variation on "Gosh-Wow!" Intended to be the movie's heart and soul, he comes off more cloying than endearing. River Phoenix is the *de rigeur* scientist-geek who functions as the group's big brain; charitable viewers will undoubtedly attribute this young actor's overblown performance to inexperience, but his stilted delivery of stilted dialogue is too wincingly awful to be forgiven. Only Jason Presson as the wrong-side-of-the-tracks kid who just happens to be a mechanical whiz, comes close to imitating a real human being.

Because the characters are mere symbols, they never achieve anything more than a bland one-dimensionality that leaves movie-goers without any emotional hook with which to connect themselves to the film's protagonists. In addition, Luke's screenplay is marred by the classic mistake of having them *tell* us how amazing and incredible it all is, instead of letting their actions—and reactions—lead us directly into a sense of wonder.

Above all, however, EXPLORERS is relentlessly dull. Unique in its inability to appeal to groups of any age, this is one movie that will have children, as well as adults, casting wistful eyes at theatre exits as it grinds on to its silly and disappointing conclusion. Joe Dante's quirkiness has conjured up an empty package that fails as science fiction, science fantasy, and even as effective satire, despite a few feeble sparks of energy in its last reel. □

## Joe Dante blames Paramount for EXPLORERS' flop

By John Nangle

The recent critical pummeling that greeted Joe Dante's quite atypical science fiction yarn EXPLORERS might be better understood in light of a conversation I had with Dante while he was promoting this rather naive boys' adventure of an alien outpost populated by TV-crazed, Dr. Seuss-like creatures.

Dante, wearing jeans and Converse high-top sneakers, was a bit punchy after encountering a verbal onslaught from New York reviewers that questioned his maturity and wondered why a man with such a scabrous wit and visual flair would have created such a sentimental, one-joke film.

"There was absolutely no pre-production on this film," said Dante. "I was given two release dates, but they yanked the film before I got my final cut. There's a scene in the film where one of the aliens, who's been wearing a mophead wig, throws it up in the air in jubilation. Well, the only reason he was wearing it was because we hadn't completed his design. His happiness was really ours when we finally decided what he would look like!"

Paramount Pictures is enraged by Dante's assertion that he didn't have enough time to finish production. The studio claims they were only shown the film six weeks before its New York opening and had to rush it into theatres because Dante had already defaulted on his Christmas delivery date.

To cries that EXPLORERS is too sweet and innocent for a director who mutilates beasts in blenders (GREMLINS), has a child with supernatural powers torment his family (TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE) and sends killer fish out to destroy an entire summer camp of toddlers (PIRANHA), Dante replies that he was just attempting something "different."

Joe Dante, former Roger Corman trailer editor, directs River Phoenix and Neek.



Leslie Rickert as Neek, makeup master Rob Bottin's alien femme fatale.

"This isn't a physical action movie, it's pretty leisurely," he said. "Maybe that's because I didn't always know where it was going. There are unfinished sections in the film that I didn't get a chance to put together. I was playing with different elements and trying for something personal. I really think this is a nice movie."

"It's like I've often wondered if I could do a remake of THE SEARCHERS and not put giant spiders in the plot," Dante continued. "People have seen EXPLORERS and criticized me for inserting too many private jokes, but I think the only time you can louse up a movie with in-joke references is when it interferes with the audience

following the story.

I was guilty of that once when I had a scene in THE HOWLING where Roger [Corman] is fishing for a quarter in a phone booth. But I've been pretty faithful to my characters in this movie and I was determined not to undercut their sincerity with cheap humor. Everybody's roasting me for having the kids in EXPLORERS attend Charles M. Jones Jr. High, thinking I went out of my way to make a gratuitous homage to my favorite Warner Bros. cartoonist. The fact is that as we were scouting for locations for filming, we came across 'Charles B. Jones Jr. High.' So we simply changed one letter, figuring it was a cute idea, and nobody lets it go at that!"

Maybe, as some reviewers speculated, Dante wandered just a little too far into Spielberg territory in EXPLORERS and doesn't have the sensibility for his ex-mentor's innocent wonder about life. Dante is unabashedly cynical.

"Steven [Spielberg] added a lot to the gross of GREMLINS with an ingenious plot alteration," admitted Dante. "Originally Gizmo [the cute little Gremlin] was only going to be in a few reels before he was to be transformed into Stripe [the wicked Gremlin]. Spielberg's idea was to introduce Gizmo earlier and keep his character alive throughout the entire film. GREMLINS isn't the type of film Spielberg would have made—with monsters exploding in microwaves and being garbled in blenders. My dark side is just a little more perverse than his." □



# FILM RATINGS

## THE BLACK CAULDRON

Directed by Ted Berman and Richard Rich. Buena Vista, 7/85, 80 mins. Voices: John Byner, John Hurt, Grant Bardsley.

In spite of some bland character design, an overabundance of cute types, a disappointing villain, and an inability to find an original or even satisfying way to end it all, the movie works. Interesting characters, a number of clever bits, some fine movement and expression, a host of beautiful panoramas and an excellent score add up to, certainly not a Disney animated classic, but nevertheless an exciting journey into Welsh legend.

● ● ● Allen Malmquist

## BLACKOUT

Directed by Douglas Hickox. HBO Premier Films, 7/85, 98 mins. With: Richard Widmark, Kathleen Quinlan, Keith Carradine, Michael Beck.

A muddled (but sporadically entertaining) sub-Hitchcock mystery about an amnesiac psycho. Reminiscent of Hammer's 1964 *HYSTERIA*, and packed with red herrings and sickening murders. From the director of *THEATRE OF BLOOD*.

● BK

## THE COVENANT

Directed by Walter Grauman. NBC Monday Night Movie/20th Century-Fox TV, 8/85, 100 mins. With: Jane Badler, Kevin Conroy, Charles Frank, Whitney Kershaw, Barry Morse.

A 2-hour TV movie, presented as a pilot for a potential series about an ageless corrupt family that has made a pact with hell to do evil, and the descendants of Biblical Judges out to stop them. This potentially interesting premise is played for all its prime time soap potential, with endless scenes of pouting and flouncing women and steely-jawed, gritting men. The cast of special guest stars is predictably killed off with plenty of

*OMEN* rip-off music by Charles Bernstein. ○ JPH

## CREEPERS

Directed by Dario Argento. New Line Cinema, 8/85, 82 mins. With: Jennifer Connelly, Donald Pleasence, Dalila DiLazzaro, Dario Nicolodi, Patrick Bauchau.

Gore footage—stabblings and decapitations—has been excised in a most obvious manner (23 minutes have been trimmed from the Italian version). However, all the creepy insect footage is dwelled upon, including Connelly falling into a vat of putrescent corpses and maggots. A mutant child is glimpsed briefly in some effective *FUNHOUSE*-type makeup by Sergio Stivaletti and Pierantonio Mecacci. All the teenage girls in the cast look alike—including the heroine—and the plot makes little sense, but there are a couple of effective sequences. ● JPH

## THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS

Directed by Freddie Francis. 20th Century-Fox, 10/85, 92 mins. With: Timothy Dalton, Stephen Rea, Jonathan Pryce, Twiggy.

A tired retelling of the exploits of Burke and Hare. Although visually interesting, the film is bogged down by a dull affair between a harlot (Twiggy) and Rock's assistant, a barrage of handwringing by members of the medical fraternity over the morality of using humans for research, and claustrophobic sets. Director Freddie Francis' fine eye for visual detail and solid performances fails to save the film from its overused plot. ● DS

## THE ELEMENT OF CRIME

Directed by Lars Von Trier. Per Holst Filmproduction, 1984 (Filmex '85). With: Michael Elphick, Esmond Knight.

Filmed entirely in a golden surreal post-apocalyptic light that recalls the vision of Dali



Glenn Close, possessed by the spirit of MAXIE, a '20s flapper.

mated somehow with Orson Welles. A retired detective returns to a nightmarish burnt-out European city to solve a series of grisly murders committed by: a) a former mentor, b) some mad lunatic, or c) himself? We never really know for sure as symbolism mixes with fantasy in this puzzling, decadent, comic, complex, oddly beautiful first feature from Von Trier. Too often drama is thought of as the main lifeblood of cinema. This film reminds us that style, composition and mood are equally as important. ● ● ● LPR

## FRANKENSTEIN'S GREAT AUNT TILLIE

Directed by Myron J. Gold. Reviewed 7/85 (videocassette), 99 mins. With: Donald Pleasence, Yvonne Furneaux, June Wilkinson, Rod Colbin, Garnett Smith.

This 1983 Mexican horror spoof (made in English) is now available on videocassette. Set in Transylvania when women's lib is dawning and steam-powered autos are the coming thing, it is the story of the latest Frankenstein descendent (Pleasence) returning to the ancestral home to reanimate the monster (a tall stone-faced Mexican with green makeup) and trying to fool the locals into buying the property for its oil rights. Since the comedy is mainly failed slapstick and the makeup reminiscent of Herman Munster, it is not surprising this never saw theatrical release. Sound on the cassette is extremely poor. ○ JPH

## GODZILLA 1985

Directed by Kobji Hashimoto & R. J. Kizer. New World, 8/85, 91 mins. With: Raymond Burr, Keiju Kobayashi, Ken Tanaka, Yasuko Sawaguchi.

After 15 years, the monster with the greatest screen presence since Kong is back. During this self-imposed absence, he's honed his acting

abilities, equipped himself with over 3,000 computer-controlled parts, and throws fewer temper tantrums when the little guys get too fresh with the weapons. But, considering his impressive screen dimensions, the nifty explosions and miniature Tokyo skyline, and all those special homages to the original Inoshiro Honda classic (i.e. his trumpeting roar, squints of confusion, and yes, even an encore performance by that intrepid reporter Steve Martin who now looks about as large as Godzilla)—considering all this, the story is as inept as ever, and it still looks like a guy in a rubber suit. Ah well, that's method acting for you.

● LPR

## THE HEAVENLY KID

Directed by Cary Medoway. Orion, 7/85, 89 mins. With: Lewis Smith, Jason Gedrick, Jane Kaczmarek, Richard Mulligan.

A Warren Beatty look-alike dies and must help a nerdy high school kid in order to gain entrance into heaven. This humorless feature includes all the cliches you'd expect from a concept that's been "done-to-death" (pardon the pun). The director manages to introduce a few unexpected plot turns which try and elevate this meaningless fiasco to the level of *HERE COMES MR. JORDAN. HEAVEN CAN WAIT*'s Concord airport becomes a bustling subway station as if that makes it any less similar. Gedrick is charming in the role of the hapless nerd, while Mulligan on a motorbike makes a snarly archangel. Cinematically speaking, 1985 will be remembered as the year of the nerd-loving director. ○ LPR

## INVASION U.S.A.

Directed by Joseph Zito. Cannon, 9/85, 107 mins. With: Chuck Norris, Richard Lynch, Melissa Profit, Alexander Zale.

Early pulp heroes like Operator 5 and The Spider are back—in the persona of Chuck Norris—battling evil forces that would destroy our democracy. The commies, replacing the "Yellow Peril" menace of the '30s, have secretly invaded the U.S.A., planning through murderous assaults on civilians to demoralize the country. Led by Richard Lynch, Red Brigades attack suburban homes, barrios, and shopping malls. As panic spreads the marauders seem unstoppable until Norris arrives as an avenging angel.

Some circles will bemoan the violence and label Norris a fascist reactionary since he doesn't read the attackers their rights before bumping them off, but, he gets the job done. Despite a few slow spots which could have been tightened by some judicious editing, and a bit more overkill than necessary to make a point, the film's large scale action sequences barrel along until Norris, in true pulp tradition, manages to lead the whole gang into a trap. Richard Wentworth, The Spider's alter ego, would be proud.

● ● DS

## THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES

Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Hammer Films/Warner Bros Television Syndication, 9/85, 89 mins (originally released in 1974). With: Peter Cushing, David Chiang, Julie Ege.

As "guilty pleasures" go, this is a remarkable, entertaining fluke. Released here theatrically only in a stupefying re-cut 1979 version as *THE 7 BROTHERS MEET DRACULA*, the full R-rated original now turns up in TV syndication from Warner's, who first shelved it. Though clearly designed as a routine merging of exploitation genres (Kung-

A damsel in distress in Jim Wynorski's *THE LOST EMPIRE*.



Smith and Hall try some WEIRD SCIENCE on a Barbi doll.





# FILM RATINGS

Fu and Gothic Horror), it succeeds despite some schlock elements, stiff dialogue, occasional miscasting and Baker's hit-and-miss direction. Its one indestructible element is its novel premise—Van Helsing, lecturing in 19th Century Hong Kong, encounters a vampire-plagued village. A marvelous merging of Eastern and Western myths, the nonstop action, literally hundreds of hideous vampires, make it irresistible. ●● BK

## THE LOST EMPIRE

Directed by Jim Wynorski. Manson/Showtime Cable, 7/85, 85 mins. With: Melanie Vincz, Raven de la Croix, Angela Aames.

A failed sword and sorcery parody. Considering the miniscule budget, the matte paintings, miniatures and optical laser effects aren't bad. Angus Scrimm, so effective a villain in PHANTASM, has little impact here, even when he turns into a lizard-headed monster, courtesy of makeup by Steve Neill which resembles a Don Post mask.

The jokes fall flat. The funniest visual is the probably unintentional lack of continuity in the bushy eyebrows of actor Bob Tessier. Producer/director/writer Wynorski's idea of hilarity is to dub an offstage dog bark after the cameo appearance of Tommy Rettig. After 20 minutes of extraneous shoot 'em-up action, the plot moves leadenly to an island retreat of a sinister eternal (Scrimm) who is seeking some ancient jewels, the value of which is described both in an opening credit crawl and later by an unnecessary bit player. ●● JPH

## MAXIE

Directed by Paul Aaron. Orion, 9/85, 98 mins. With: Glenn Close, Mandy Patinkin, Ruth Gordon, Barnard Hughes, Valerie Curtin.

Glenn Close is sensational as Jan, a contemporary wife who finds herself possessed by Maxie, the ghost of a 1920's flapper actress. The intrusion prompts her to scream out in frustration "I'm a woman, not a flop house." The high flying ghost is a marked contrast to the puritanical, catholic Jan leading to some very funny moments with her employer, a Bishop (Barnard Hughes). The appearance of the late Ruth Gordon is a poignant moment when she recognizes the ghost as her old friend. A delightful romantic comedy, based on a Jack Finney story, "Marion's Wall." ●● DS

## PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE

Directed by Tim Burton. Warner Bros, 7/85, 90 mins. With: Paul Reubens, Elizabeth Daily, Mark Holton, Diane Salinger, Judd Omen.

FILM TITLE	●●●●			●●●●		●●●●		●●●●		○		
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	WORTHLESS	FSC	KC	BC	DKF	BK	LPR	DS
<b>AMAZING STORIES</b> /Steven Spielberg NBC-TV, 9/85, 30 mins.			●	○	●●	●●	●	●	●	●	●●	
<b>BACK TO THE FUTURE</b> /Robert Zemeckis Universal, 7/85, 116 mins.	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
<b>THE BLACK CAULDRON</b> /Berman & Rich Buena Vista, 7/85, 80 mins.	●●●	●●	●	●●	●●	●●	○	●●	○	●●	●●	●●
<b>THE BRIDE</b> /Franc Roddam Columbia, 8/85, 118 mins.	●●	●	○	●●	○	●●	○	●●	○	●●	●●	●●
<b>COCOON</b> /Ron Howard 20th Century-Fox, 6/85, 92 mins.	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●	●	●●	●	●	●	●	●●	●●
<b>CREATURE</b> /Bill Malone Transworld Ent. 3/85.	●●					●●		●●	●			●●
<b>DAY OF THE DEAD</b> /George Romero United Film Dist., 7/85, 102 mins.	●●●●			●●		●●		●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
<b>THE EMERALD FOREST</b> /John Boorman Embassy, 6/85, 114 mins.	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
<b>E.T.</b> /Steven Spielberg Universal, 7/85 (re-release), 115 mins.	●●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●●
<b>EXPLORERS</b> /Joe Dante Paramount, 10/85, 109 mins.	●	●●●	○	●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>FRIGHT NIGHT</b> /Tom Holland Columbia, 8/85, 105 mins.	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●
<b>GHOSTBUSTERS</b> /Ivan Reitman Columbia, 8/85 (re-release), 107 mins.		●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●
<b>GODZILLA 1985</b> /Hashimoto & Kizer New World, 9/85, 91 mins.	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	●	●
<b>THE GOONIES</b> /Richard Donner Warner Bros, 6/85, 111 mins.	●●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●●
<b>GREMLINS</b> /Joe Dante Warner Bros, 8/85 (re-release), 109 mins.	●	●●●	●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●●
<b>LIFEFORCE</b> /Tobe Hooper Tri-Star, 6/85, 101 mins.	●●●●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●●
<b>MAD MAX—BEYOND THUNDERDOME</b> /Miller & Ogilvie, Warner Bros, 7/85, 106 mins.	●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●
<b>MY SCIENCE PROJECT</b> /Jonathan Betuel Buena Vista, 8/85, 94 mins.	○		●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●
<b>PALE RIDER</b> /Clint Eastwood Warner Bros, 6/85, 115 mins.	●●		●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●
<b>REAL GENIUS</b> /Martha Coolidge Tri-Star, 8/85, 104 mins.	●●	●●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD</b> /Dan O'Bannon, Orion, 8/85, 91 mins.	●●●		●	●●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●●●
<b>RETURN TO OZ</b> /Walter Murch Buena Vista, 6/85, 110 mins.	●●		●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●
<b>THE TWILIGHT ZONE</b> /Phil DeGuere CBS-TV, 9/85, 60 mins.	●●	●●●	●●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●
<b>A VIEW TO A KILL</b> /John Glen MGM/UA, 5/85 131 mins.	●		●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
<b>WARNING SIGN</b> /Hal Barwood 20th Century-Fox, 8/85, 100 mins.	●●●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>WEIRD SCIENCE</b> /John Hughes Universal, 8/85, 94 mins.	○	●	●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●●

FSC/Frederick S. Clarke KC/Kyle Counts BC/Bruce Crouchet DKF/Dennis K. Fischer  
JPH/Judith P. Harris BK/Bill Kelley LPR/Les Paul Robley DS/Dan Scapperotti

Paul Reubens' improvisational comedy routine about a kid who never grew up, fleshed-out to feature length, directed with flair by Tim Burton in his feature debut. Burton, who made VINCENT and FRANKENWEENIE for Walt Disney, two brilliant shorts that got only limited exposure, peppers the action with captivating bits of set design, stop motion and cel animation that stamp the film with an indelible, personal touch.

At first hard to take, Reubens' Pee-wee persona grows on you. By the fade-out I was looking forward to the next big adventure—as long as Burton directs. ●● FSC

## PLAN 3-D FROM OUTER SPACE

Directed by Murray Lerner. Digital Productions, 9/85, 3 mins. Programmers: John Whitney Jr., Gary Demos.

The first 3-D short to be entirely computer-generated. Created by 3-D genius Murray Lerner (maker of that ultimate 3-D Disney extravaganza, MAGIC JOURNEYS), with help from John Whitney Jr., and Gary Demos of Digital Productions (the computer simulation creators for THE LAST STARFIGHTER), this dazzling 3 minutes is well worth the price of admission by itself. Spectacle features a glowing amoeba, throbbing and puckering before your

very polaroid glasses, while a swirling demonic ocean writhes behind it. ●●●● LPR

## REAL GENIUS

Directed by Martha Coolidge. Tri-Star, 8/85, 104 mins. With: Val Kilmer, Gabe Jarret, Michelle Meyrink, William Atherton, Jonathan Gries, Patti D'Arbanville.

A cute comedy about yet another nerdy teenager. This time he's a laser genius being used for evil ends by teacher William Atherton, who is beginning to get typecast in villainous roles. After a lengthy buildup, the laser is created and the film swings into unbelievable territory where the genius kids infiltrate a military installation. The ending, an elaborate sight gag

involving a house being demolished by popcorn, is a real dud. ●● JPH

## THE RE-ANIMATOR

Directed by Stuart Gordon. Empire Pictures, 6/85, 86 mins. With: Jeffrey Combs, Bruce Abbott, Barbara Crampton, David Gale, Robert Sampson.

The gory and somewhat humorous tale of a modern medical student's quest to perfect a serum to bring the dead back to life. An evil doctor wants to steal the serum, is decapitated and re-animated, and headless, plots his revenge. Not for the squeamish, with an enjoyably offbeat tone that recalls the garish pulp of the '30s. ●● DKF

## REMO WILLIAMS: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Directed by Guy Hamilton. Orion, 8/85. With: Fred Ward, Joel Grey, J.A. Preston, Wilford Brimley, Kate Mulgrew.

Amiable nonsense based on "The Destroyer" novels about a supersecret government agency that gives a cop a new face and identity, trains him in quasi-mystical martial arts techniques, and sends him off to assassinate "the bad guys." Ward plays the titular hero as a chummy Charles Bronson type, and the appeal is expected to lead to a series. Good lightweight entertainment. ●● DKF

## WARNING SIGN

Directed by Hal Barwood. 20th Century-Fox, 8/85, 100 mins. With: Kathleen Quinlan, Sam Waterson, Yaphet Kotto, Jeffrey DeMunn.

In its first half, this is a fairly intelligent and interesting exploration on what would happen if a germ warfare virus were accidentally unleashed in a scientific laboratory. However, once the victims seem to pop back to life and become homicidal maniacs, credibility is breached and the film never quite recovers. This combination of THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN and RAGE could have led to a very powerful motion picture, too bad this isn't it. ● DKF

## WEIRD SCIENCE

Directed by John Hughes. Universal, 7/85, 94 mins. With: Anthony Michael Hall, Kelly LeBrock, Ian Mitchell-Smith.

Two teenagers use a computer to turn a Barbi doll into Kelly LeBrock, the woman of their fantasies who is capable of granting any and every wish. This fantasy's comedy is scattershot, silly, and very adolescent, appealing mainly to 14 year-olds despite the sensuality that LeBrock exudes. However, it does offer a glimpse of some colorful scenes from the original FRANKENSTEIN, which prove the best part of the film. ● DKF



# Extraordinary World of the Nome King

*Will Vinton Productions provided character animation for Walt Disney's RETURN TO OZ that was groundbreaking.*

by Janeen A. Olsen

RETURN TO OZ, a Disney release, serves up a smorgasbord of unexpected and exciting special effects. Years of planning went into the development of spectacular sets and innovative animatronics, all designed to give the live-action adventure an aura of realistic fantasy. The *piece de resistance* as envisioned by director Walter Murch, however, was to be the Nome King, who in terms of dramatic importance is second only to Dorothy, and who, Murch said, must be brought to life in stop-motion through clay animation.

In such ways is film history made. The concept is quite revolutionary. Not only is the Nome King a central character of the story, he is its principal antagonist. To animate this major character in an otherwise live-action film is a daring enterprise with a myriad of built-in hazards, not the least of which becomes making the audience willingly suspend disbelief and accept the special effects as a real character.

Murch knew that the only special effect which would achieve the level of sophistication that he sought was clay animation. Specifically, he wanted the work of Will Vinton, the foremost practitioner of clay animation in the world. Vinton's work has been created under the registered trademark of Claymation® since the mid-seventies. As early as 1982 Murch began pre-production meetings on the Nome King with Vinton and his team of Claymation animators, machinists, editors, and electronics personnel at Will Vinton Productions in Portland, Oregon.

"When I first saw the work of Will Vinton in the pre-production stage of the movie," said Paul Maslansky, the producer of RETURN



Clay king Will Vinton surrounded by minions of the Nome King created by his Portland, Oregon-based production company for Walt Disney's RETURN TO OZ.

TO OZ. "I found it suspect. I didn't think it would integrate properly with the other special effects, both optical and mechanical, in the film. Walter Murch was very strong, however, in believing that Vinton's work would succeed.

"The result is that Walter Murch was right," continued Maslansky. "The work of Will Vinton and his animators tremendously enhances the film and brings it to that plane of achievement in special effects for which we strive. Claymation has made an immense contribution to the movie. You can't imagine the work involved in coordinating Claymation with live-action. At first I thought it was just a sophisticated Gumby.

Now I'm a believer."

When David Altschul, the producer of the Claymation components of the film, said that there exists "no place else in the world that this could have been done," he refers in part to the many years of experimentation and growth which Claymation has seen. In 1974 Vinton's CLOSED MONDAYS won an Academy Award for best animated short film [see 4:3:40]. Vinton's awards, national and international, are literally too numerous to count, so much so that there is not enough wall space at the studio on which to display them all. Only about one hundred or so can be seen from the lobby.

The awards have been for a

variety of short Claymation films such as, MARTIN THE COBBLER, RIP VAN WINKLE, and THE LITTLE PRINCE. Since 1974 Vinton has received more Academy Award nominations than any other producer of animated films in the world. Recently, his work in commercials has been honored by two Cleos, the premier award in the advertising industry. Simultaneous with the beginning of work on RETURN TO OZ, Will Vinton Productions was completing production on their first Claymation feature-length film, THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN (see page 49), which is scheduled for major release in October.

"Many of the things we learned on that applied directly to our work on RETURN TO OZ," said Vinton. "Moreover, the same group of people worked on both films and a lot of the credit goes to them. We've developed Claymation to the point where we can do exactly what live-action does; plus, we've now had experience with every type of optical compositing that exists. We've gone far beyond the early days of clay animation. We're more of a special effects studio now."

The Nome King is unlike anything Vinton has done before. Previously, his characters were very broad, colorful, and cartoon-like, more caricatures than anything else. For RETURN TO OZ, however, Murch envisioned the nomes and their king to be quite realistic, indistinguishable as to whether they are rock-like humans or human-like rocks. Since clay is not generally considered a realistic medium, this posed numerous challenges in both design and execution for Vinton's staff.

Only the first draft of RETURN TO OZ was completed when





Dorothy, Tik-Tok, Jack Pumpkinhead and the Gump encounter the Nome King for the first time as a 30-foot high head embedded in the side of a rock cliff. Inset: Clay animator Bill Feisterman works on a close-up of the Nome King's face. The video monitors help to compare the new exposure with the previous frame exposed, for fluid movement. Animators also used reference footage of actor Nichol Williamson.

Murch, Vinton, Altschul, and Barry Bruce, Vinton's art director, first met in Portland to conceptualize the Claymation for the film. Four subsequent drafts were to follow. During the many story sessions the concept of the nomes evolved further and further away from L. Frank Baum's small, squat, cherub-like creatures and closer to more sinister, wild, otherworldly beings actually composed of rock. The nomes are the only characters in the film to deviate substantially in design from Baum's original story.

Intending that this new interpretation of the nomes would enhance significantly the dramatic impact of the Nome King as principal antagonist, Murch returned to

Elstree studios in London where the live-action would be filmed. While he began work on the sets into which the nomes would later be composited, Vinton and his staff began testing their ideas with Claymation. Experiments were made to create the subterranean movement of nomes under rocky surfaces and also to create recognizable faces which could move over rock as if it were a sea of plasma.

"We wanted it to look like real rock that came to life and moved," explained Vinton. "We asked ourselves, what is the essence of rock? Well, the primary characteristic of rock is that it doesn't move; it is inert. Once we made it move, it was no longer rock. This is the kind of



Craig Bartlett animates the spy nome that first spots Dorothy and her friends when they land on the Nome King's mountain. The clay shots were later composited with the stationary rock sets built and photographed at EMI Elstree Studios in England.



dichotomy which we had to overcome. The Nome King that you see evolved out of endless discussions on the nature of rockiness."

By far the most interesting concept that emerged from the pre-production meetings with Murch was the idea that as the Nome King gained power over Dorothy and her friends he would gradually become more human-looking. So, not only were Vinton and his staff concerned with the consistency in design of a character within a scene, but they also had to carefully plan the slow film-long transformation of the Nome King from rough-hewn rock to rock-like human. This demanded the mammoth task of communicating and coordinating with London in remarkable detail. It also required an even higher level of artistic and technical expertise from the animators than ever before.

Vinton, Altschul, and Bruce each traveled to London, which by now was being called Oz by the Portland studio, to participate in preproduction and also in Murch's filming of the principal photog-

raphy relating to all of the Claymation sequences. Working with production designer Norman Reynolds, they coordinated the design of the sets with the design of the Nome King. Notes, snapshots, and drawings were made so that back in Portland they could accurately match composition, lighting, and texture. It was very much a process of give-and-take from the start, with Murch and Vinton each contributing to the scenes in which the live-action would eventually be composited with Claymation.

In addition to the live-action clips, the animators needed reference film of Nicol Williamson, the actor who portrays the Nome King in his human-like form. Williamson was filmed acting out the scenes which eventually would be dramatized through clay to his voice. Reference footage was also shot for every clay creature throughout the film. It is from this reference footage that Vinton and his animators captured the nuances of expression and mannerisms which brought their special effects





The Nome King degenerates at the fiery climax and threatens to swallow Jack Pumpkinhead (top). Doug Aberle is shown using a position gauge on the puppet during filming (bottom). Flame background plates were shot in London and front-projected on a screen behind the puppets. Flickering lighting in the shot was done with a filmstrip projector.

to life.

"The actor should feel loose and be able to move about and show the lines visually as well as telling them verbally," said Vinton, in a memo to the filmmakers in London. "Though a locked-off camera is preferable, I would rather have the camera operator have to move around to keep up with the actor than to have the actor feel restricted in his movement and thus perhaps restricted in the delivery of the line. We take our cues from the actor; the more he gives us the more we seem to have to work with."

Back in Portland the Claymation team began building their miniature sets to match the live-action sets in London. In their 12,000 square-foot studio there were roughly a dozen separate sets in operation at any one time, some four or five of which were major sets associated with longer scenes and the rest of which were changed frequently as shorter scenes were created and completed.

Each set belonged to just one Claymator and over the two and a-

half years that Will Vinton Productions was involved with RETURN TO OZ, nine Claymation animators worked on the film. During the final nine months of Claymation work twenty people at Vinton's were working full-time on the world of the Nome King.

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Dorothy first encounters the Nome King on a ledge where she and her companions have fallen after their flight from the wicked witch Mombi. At this stage the Nome King appears in the cliff wall with features barely distinguishable from the nat-

ural rock formations which fissure and rumble as he speaks. The set for this face, roughly chin to forehead, is six inches high.

Later, in his throne room, a cavernous chamber in the bowels of the mountain, the Nome King becomes more and more human. His head emerges from the rock wall. The outlines for a body become visible. Hands and arms emerge. Eventually, human eyes fill the rough-hewn sockets, and the rock surrounding his body begins to form into the folds of a robe. The corresponding full-figure set for these sequences stands four feet high. Moreover, since so much Claymation appears in the closing scenes of the film, there were actually two sets for this aspect of the Nome King, the second set being a close-up of his head and shoulders.

These sets are far larger than Vinton and his staff had worked with before. In THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN, for example, Huck, Tom, Becky, and Twain all stand between eight and nine inches tall. The larger sets for RETURN TO OZ were created specifically to allow the Claymators to work in far greater detail. This played a major role in making the nomes look very realistic and not like traditional clay animation creatures at all. As the animators found out, however, the larger sets were not without their problems.

"Armaturing to the larger size was just another challenge we had to face," comments Bruce. "Our armatures are built using swivel joints of brass, steel, and aluminum. Imagine a two-foot arm sticking out and encased in clay. It is very, very heavy. Now you have to move the arm no more than one-quarter inch between each take in order to maintain the realism. It's a kind of torture; you feel like something may be going wrong at every moment."

The clay itself was not without its problems, either. Months of experimentation went into the modification of the closely guarded and delicately balanced clay formula ordinarily used by Vinton. Crates of rock samples like those used on the live-action set arrived from London. These rocks were actually made with

styrofoam smeared with plaster which in turn was smeared with paint. Matching the color in plasticene clay was relatively easy, but matching the texture was not. Several materials from sand to walnut shells were tried in the formula, the most successful of which proved to be an aggregate of small black rock. Then other adjustments were made in the formula to produce a consistency that could easily be moved for animation. Finally, to give the clay a burnished rock surface, small rocks were dipped in water and used to shape the clay as it was animated.

In previous work, Vinton has frequently filmed using double frames. This works wonderfully when one desires an end product that is somewhat stylized. On RETURN TO OZ, however, the Claymators filmed single frame in order to achieve the realism they were looking for. Essentially, this demanded far more technical and artistic precision because they were required to work twice as hard and twice as long for the same amount of actual running time.

Understanding that there are twenty-four frames in a second, or 1,440 frames in a minute, this becomes an overwhelming task when one considers that a Claymator has what is called "a fast day" when he or she finishes fifty frames. In several more difficult scenes like those where a live-action character passes through a rock, a Claymator could shoot only roughly fifteen to twenty frames a day—slightly less than a second of actual running time.

"It is to our credit," said Vinton, "that we have developed this technique to the level that we have. Essentially, we can now vary our methods with great finesse, and as a result we've become capable of doing what live-action does."

Vinton Claymators go through an intense apprenticeship at the studio of at least a year and a-half before they are given any complex assignments. Most of Vinton's animators have been working with him for many years. "When I take on a new apprentice," explained Vinton, "I look for two important criteria. First, the Claymator must have aptitude in sculpting. And second, the Claymator must be a performer. Occasionally, we have in-house acting workshops.

"When we move clay into motion, we are performing in front of the camera," he continued. "We go through in microcosm exactly what an actor goes through. What is about to happen? What are the character's motivations? How do I express the dramatic context of this moment? Aesthetically, we have developed a special style and approach. It is that style which sets us apart."

Fundamentally, two types of

An ornament room Nome being sculpted in clay by Joanne Radmilovich.





**By Daniel J. Fiebiger**

Next year is the year of a spectacular astronomical event: Halley's comet. In anticipation of the event, Will Vinton Productions of Portland, Oregon made *THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN*, a feature film in their Claymation process. Vinton's name for the use of clay (as opposed to drawings) as a medium for animation. Characters, sets, and even special effects are created from standard modeling clay.

"I came in with Halley's comet in 1835 when I was born and I intend to go out with it," declares Mark Twain to an unbelieving crowd from the deck of his preposterous flying machine as the film opens. The production, Vinton's first feature, was completed in 1984 and will be released by Atlantic Pictures early next year.

Vinton has spent more than a decade creating remarkable clay animation films, starting with *CLOSED MONDAYS*, an 8 minute film co-produced with Bob Gardiner that won an Academy Award for best animated film of 1974. Several short films, and 3 more Academy Award nominations later, Vinton was approached by executive producer Hugh Kennedy Tirrell with the idea of doing a feature on one of Tirrell's favorite subjects, Mark Twain.

After extensive research on the life and works of Twain conducted by Dan and Mary Yost, writer Susan Shadburn developed an original story about Twain's search for his personal destiny as told to three close friends, Huck Finn, Becky Thatcher, and Tom Sawyer.

The time is 1910. Twain makes the announcement of his pursuit of Halley's comet to a small crowd while standing on the deck of his floating airship. Part Jules Verne balloon and part Mississippi riverboat, the contraption is designed to carry Twain half way around the world where he can intercept the comet's tail.

Huck, Tom, and Becky stow



*Will Vinton Productions completes the first full-length feature in their Claymation process.*



Mark Gustafson animates a character on board Twain's spacebound steamship.

away on the ship as it begins its journey. As they wander the ship they discover a surrealistic elevator called an "Indexovator" which acts as an index to the literary contents of the ship. When Twain discovers the stowaways he proceeds to reminisce about his life and writings.

Via the indexovator, Twain's stories come to life for the kids, and they discover a complex man struggling with a cynical view of life. In search of a greater purpose to his existence, Twain hopes to find some answers when he passes through the comet's tail.

Three and-a-half years in the making, the film started production with character designer Barry Bruce developing sketches and storyboards based on Shadburn's screenplay. After Vinton approved the designs, Bruce sculpted the characters in clay while Joan Gratz designed the sets. Gary McRobert developed a computerized motion control system to replace the hand cranked wooden system that Vinton and his animators had used for their short films.

Joan Gratz and Don Merkt sculpted the film's elaborate clay sets. Some sets were so large that

standard sheets of plywood base normally used by the filmmakers weren't thick enough to hold the quarter ton of clay that was being built-up on the table tops. This problem led to the sets being split up into smaller tabled sections with double layers of wood for steady support, which also made it easier for the animators to work.

Vinton journeyed south to Los Angeles to record actor James Whitmore as the voice of Mark Twain. Meanwhile, a host of Northwest actors was recorded in the Portland studio of music composer Billy Scream. The entire film was photographed in black and

white live-action footage as the sound was being recorded to act as a guide to be used by Vinton's animators for timing and camera angles.

Billy Scream and co-composer Paul Jamison also spent three and-a-half years recording a complex musical score on multiple synthesizers, creating as many as ten drafts of the various musical cues from which Vinton made selections for the final score.

Vinton directed the film somewhat like a live-action director. Some shots were done several times to get exactly the proper "performance" from each character. When the animation was completed Vinton and his assistants fine-edited the film as would be done with live-action, to smooth the pacing.

Then sound artists, including Billy Scream, recorded thousands of sound effects and edited them into as many as 41 tracks which were then mixed down to two-track stereo and combined with music and voice tracks at Studio-C in San Francisco. The process of creating sound took several months. Special consultant to the film was Walter Murch, a veteran sound artist, (*THE RAIN PEOPLE*, *THE CONVERSATION*, and *APOCALYPSE NOW*—the latter winning him an Oscar), and director of *RETURN TO OZ*. □

Left: Twain with Tom, Becky, and Huck in his library. Middle: Twain's ship enters the tail of Halley's Comet. Right: The Astroviewer searches through time.







Mark Gustafson animates the Nome King's hand using a position gauge, working with the clay model built half-human size.

scenes were shot at Will Vinton Productions for RETURN TO OZ—those composed entirely of clay and those which would later be composited with live action. Of the composites, some were accomplished using a bi-pack camera which offers a sort of split-screen image with a soft edge where the live-action and Claymation meet. Neither element is placed in front of the other, and each must remain perfectly static at the point where the images meet.

A good example of this kind of scene is again the one where Dorothy first meets the Nome King. In London Fairuza Balk, who played Dorothy, directed her lines to a solid rock wall. When this footage reached Vinton's it was slipped in the

A partially finished sculpture of the Nome King's close-up head using natural eyes.



camera. The animator, Joan Gratz, could look through the camera and see how the Nome King's face appeared in the rock wall, making adjustments to improve the texturing where the live-action and Claymation intersected.

The other composite scenes required different methods of compositing such as blue-screen or front-light/backlight—both methods for creating a traveling matte which would allow the live-action and Claymation to change their borders with respect to one another. In these cases a specially aligned camera-projector rig was carefully put in place before the clay set. A corresponding video monitor helped the animator observe the progress of the scene. Tracking the movement of the clay on video monitors was especially important in the scenes where the nomes were less human and more rockish because the clay would stretch and fissure in complicated ways.

Once a Claymation scene was completed it was processed and shipped to London. Claymators had to wait a minimum of two days before receiving feedback from Murch. Meanwhile, the set had to remain. Often, especially early in production, scenes had to be completely redone several times in order for everything—lighting, design, synchronization, colors, and textures—to be perfect.

"The actual compositing was so far down the line in London," said Bruce, "that by the time we had completed all of our work on the film, we had seen only three or four actual composites of our work with live-action. Therefore, we had to count completely on our expertise and on

Murch's judgement as to whether what we were doing was working."

"Doing creative work tailored to somebody else's vision," said Altschul, "is always tricky, and the huge chasm of time and distance between us and Oz just compounded the problem. Early on it seemed we were slowly approaching Walter Murch's vision of the sequences by a process of triangulation. Some scenes were redone several times. Then for the last several months, with few exceptions, everything was being accepted like clockwork."

One of these few exceptions was the sequence in which the Nome King loses his power to Dorothy, regressing and decaying until he is finally reduced to an angry pile of rubble. The dramatic climax of the film, this scene demanded rather a great deal of emotional stamina from its animator, Doug Aberle. Early gleeful thoughts of, "I get to kill him," turned after three different takes over two long months to, "I have to kill him again." The fourth

Animator Tom Gasek uses rods fitted to hidden anchor points to manipulate the head of the second stage Nome King, as the character emerges from a mountain cavern.



attempt worked.

"Nicol Williamson did a marvelous job in the film," said Aberle. "Like he said recently, he gave a real over-the-top kind of performance. His unique speech pattern is inspiring. So much interpretation can go into animating his voice."

This isn't all that Williamson gave Aberle to work with. Early in production a plaster cast of Williamson's head arrived from London. "There are so many special effects in movies nowadays," said Bruce, "that actors take this sort of thing as a matter of course." From the plaster cast, clay facsimiles of Williamson were created with different amounts of texturing at various stages in the evolution of the Nome King.

From photographs of Williamson, prosthetic eyes were made, and these were used in the Claymation stage before Williamson actually appeared. A good example of the exacting process of bridging the gap between clay and actor was in the carefully planned evolution of the Nome King's tongue. From scene to scene the clay tongue gradually develops a pinkish tinge to match Williamson's.

After this kind of attention to detail in the creation of the Nome King, only the same kind of care could be given to his demise. Aberle spent a full week sculpting the four-foot-high set of the Nome King to precise specifications. He then spent a week filming as he destroyed his set completely. When he received word a few days later from Murch that some small aspect of the sequence didn't work, Aberle then had to put in another full week rebuilding what he had just destroyed.

"On my first try at destroying the Nome King I actually cut the clay away," said Aberle. "When this is shot in stop-motion the end result makes the Nome King look like he is dissolving. Murch decided he didn't want dissolving; he wanted crumbling. So, I had to find a way to support the pieces of clay as they fell away from the Nome King."

"On the second and third tries I suspended the clay bits from monofilaments. Even though I did my best

continued on page 58



## RETURN TO OZ

A Buena Vista release. 6/85, 110 mins. In color. Director, Walter Murch. Producer, Paul Maslansky. Executive producer, Gary Kurtz. Screenplay, Walter Murch and Gill Dennis. Director of photography, David Watkin. Editor, Leslie Hodgson. Production designer, Norman Reynolds. Art director, Charles Bishop. Animatronic design supervisor, Lyle Conway. Based on the books "Ozma of Oz" and "The Land of Oz" by L. Frank Baum.

Nome King ..... Nicol Williamson  
Princess Mombi ..... Jean Marsh  
Dorothy ..... Fairuza Balk  
Aunt Em ..... Piper Laurie  
Uncle Henry ..... Matt Clark  
Tik Tok ..... Michael Sundin, Tim Rose, Sean Barrett (voice)

by Harry S. McCracken

Advance word had it that RETURN TO OZ was to be a rigorously accurate recreation of the land of Oz as envisioned by Baum; this turns out to be not quite as true as it might have been. (Indeed, the filmmakers have taken fewer liberties with John R. Neill's illustrations than with Baum's text.) Director Walter Murch and co-screenwriter Gill Dennis have taken the plot of Baum's third Oz book, *Ozma of Oz*, added some of the characters from the second book, *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, and framed this composite story with Kansas sequences almost entirely of their own invention. Both of the film's major villains, while based on Baum characters, have been extensively reworked, and many other changes of greater or lesser importance have been made. (There are also a number of direct references to 1939's WIZARD OF OZ.) Still, the film, at its best, captures well the distinctive spirit of Baum's work, and most of the screenwriters' liberties are understandable ones.

Fairuza Balk is a fine, skillful Dorothy, and Murch works well with his actors. But once Dorothy is transported—by a very realistic raging river—to the Emerald City, which has been destroyed by the wicked Nome King, the film's problems begin to surface. For one thing, this is a distressingly plain-looking Oz; while later interior sets are handsome, the initial outdoor scenes depict an Oz scarcely different from the Kansas Dorothy just left. (This is presumably due at least in part to the last moment budget cuts which prevented the extensive location shooting that had been planned.)

A much more damaging weakness—the film's central flaw, in fact—is the filmmakers' inability to completely accomplish the Herculean task of bringing Dorothy's companions-in-adventure to life. Oddly enough, what might seem to be the most difficult aspects of the job are handled exceptionally well; Lyle Conway's creature designs are outstanding, and the characters move intelligently and

# Return To OZ

*Will Vinton's Nome King is the high point of a wonderful cast of amazing fantasy characters.*



Dorothy (Fairuza Balk) and Billina the hen, one of the film's remarkable animatronic characters supervised by mechanical effects expert Lyle Conway.

convincingly. Billina, the talking hen, is a remarkable imitation of the real thing; the best testimonial to her success is that one can't tell the mechanized hen from the live one which is used in some shots. The other creations—Tik Tok the robot, Jack Pumpkinhead, and the Gump, a jerry-rigged flying machine made of sofas, palm fronds, and a moosehead—are all technically excellent, with the only glaring problem being a too obvious difference between the costumed-performer Jack Pumpkinhead and the puppet version.

But Dorothy's friends remain ciphers, largely for an old-fashioned reason; a weak script that doesn't establish their personalities very well. The introduction of each character is rushed and underdeveloped, and we don't get to know the characters much better as the film proceeds. The creatures' personalities are described, rather than demonstrated, and most of the dialogue is stilted and strangely remote; the characters don't hold conversations so much as make wisecracks—usually unfunny ones—about whatever is happening at the moment. Voice casting, with the exception of Conway's performance as the Gump, is unfortunately bland, and the voices are of particular importance since the characters

don't have terribly expressive faces.

Despite being ultimately disappointing, Dorothy's companions are groundbreaking creations in many ways, and the more fully realized performers of this type which are undoubtedly around the corner will owe much to these pioneers. (Dorothy's old friends the Scarecrow, The Tinman, and Cowardly Lion are less ambitious creations which appear only briefly, although Justin Case's wonderfully floppy performance as the Scarecrow is a very satisfying interpretation of the character as drawn by John R. Neill.)

Happily, the villains of the film are much more vividly brought to life. The Wheelers, creatures with wheels instead of hands and feet, are macabre and funny at the same time, if a bit hammily performed. Jean Marsh's portrayal of Princess Mombi—a combination of two Baum characters—is witty and properly threatening. (Mombi changes heads as other women change dresses, and the effects associated with this peculiar ability include some of the most bizarrely effective creations in the film, such as a chamber circled with thirty living, breathing womens' heads on pedestals.)

The central villain, though, is the Nome King—a shapeshifting

intelligent rock formation who has seized the Emerald City—and the film's high-point is the climactic sequence showcasing this character. He is, at first, brought to life through Will Vinton's Claymation process, and then by actor Nicol Williamson, sporting some of the heaviest makeup in movie history; it's a tribute to both Vinton and Williamson that the transformation is eminently believable and nearly seamless.

Vinton's animation is a breakthrough achievement; his Nome King is the first bit of stop-motion animation of any sort which succeeds as character animation in the way good cel animation has for decades. Vinton has been quietly revolutionizing his artform during the past few years, and the Nome King is his finest creation yet, a malefactor in the classic Disney mold.

Walter Murch has done, for the most part, a fine job of integrating the myriad components of the film: the actors, puppets, special effects, and design aspects. Norman Reynolds' production design gives Oz an appropriately turn-of-the-century look, as does Lyle Conway's creature design. Tik Tok, for example, is a wonderfully archaic robot, with details as small as the shape of his wind-up keys helping the total effect.

Special effects are of a high standard, excepting a few matte shots almost as unrealistic as those in the 1939 film, and an excessive graininess in several scenes. Zoran Perisic contributes the whimsical, expert footage in which the Gump, leisurely flapping his frond-wings, carries Dorothy and her chums over Oz, and a scene in which Dorothy tumbles through the earth, which while not the least bit realistic, is imaginative and attractive.

But despite the film's abundance of excellent components, the sum product is unsatisfying. The film's pace is choppy and hurried; there's not enough time to digest most scenes before the movie moves on. Too much of the story is explained in brief, confusing snippets of dialogue; the explanation at the film's end of the secret of Ozma, the girl ruler of Oz, for instance, is almost incomprehensible—and unnecessary. The movie—like most of Baum's books—has little narrative drive, and no solid core.

Even so, the film is in many ways an impressive accomplishment. RETURN TO OZ is the antithesis of the typical crassly commercial sequel, and a movie with a very real integrity all its own. If it never entirely succeeds in winning our hearts, it most definitely deserves to win our respect, and that's an achievement to be cherished. □





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### LIFEFORCE

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genre for wish-fulfillment, treating us to cute kids, cute adolescents, cute lovers, cute aliens, and even cute septagenarians who keep finding unlikely cute new ways to live happily ever after. Hooper's film confronts us with three protagonists (astronaut Carlsen, SAS officer Colin Caine, and thanatologist Hans Fallada) who are not only not cute, but also not even particularly likable.

And in the dark, 40-watt world Hooper creates, you can forget about any prospects for living happily ever after. His protagonists may or may not save the world from the space vampires, but in doing so they reveal a ruthlessness and callousness that can only make us wonder whether humans are much different from the aliens.

In this respect, Hooper and scriptwriters Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby have picked up on some

of the more interesting implications of Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires*, the novel from which LIFEFORCE was adapted. One of the assumptions of that novel was that *all* life is to some extent vampiric—that all creatures feed on each other's life forces. In Hooper's hands, this notion that all life is vampiric shades into the more film-specific notion that all human life is voyeuristic—that we feed by watching each other's private moments.

From its early shot of a nude Mathilda May lying in a clear coffin-like container, through shots of her serenely walking nude through the London Space Research Center, through Carlsen's hypnotized "vision" of her seducing an unwary driver, to its final scene of Carlsen and the vampire in a passionate embrace on a crypt in St. Paul's Cathedral, this film puts its audience in an inherently voyeuristic role.

A single line may be the key to understanding Hooper's strategy.

As he brutally roughs up a young girl he believes has been possessed by the vampire, a frenzied Carlsen warns a shocked Colonel Caine (Peter Firth) to go into the next room if he doesn't want to watch. "Not at all," Caine crisply replies, "I am a natural voyeur." And so are we all Hooper seems to be saying, both through the actions of his characters and through the style of his filming.

Restless camerawork makes us see each scene from odd and oddly numerous angles—often framing the scene through glass or on a video monitor, confronting us with faces that are always too close to be comfortable, and repeatedly employs a wide-angle lens that gives us a fish-eyed view reminiscent of the alien's perspective in *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE*—all putting us in unfamiliar and uneasy roles as spectators.

LIFEFORCE is a film of fascinatingly anguished faces (Firth does little but watch the others in the film

and Professor Fallada, played by a sartorially resplendent Frank Finlay, almost caricatures the role of detached scientific observer), and we secretly share with them their looking, deriving pleasure from their horror, ultimately seeing Hooper's characters as sources for our needs, much the same as the vampires see them as sources for life force.

Many will be offended not by the nudity in LIFEFORCE, but by its gratuitous hostility toward women. Others will simply be disappointed by the film's refusal to allow itself even a single sentimental moment, a refusal making any real empathy for its characters quite impossible. Some may find its edginess so excessive as to be humorous. But, if the future of the SF film is to be more than the formulaic pandering to emotions and the showcasing of ever more elaborate special effects, LIFEFORCE, much like Carpenter's *THE THING*, may point the way. □



## COCOON

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THE BIG CHILL, the Academy will no doubt feel compelled to single some out.

Key to the film's success are the performances by Jessica Tandy and Wilford Brimley. Tandy, who plays Hume Cronyn's wife (in real life, too), shows off more of a range of emotions than her distaff colleagues here largely because she has to deal with Cronyn's sowing his wild oats after a dip in more than just that fountain of youth. It's certainly a greater range than she had a chance to display in *THE BIRDS* (1963). But her stage and screen career has spanned more than fifty years and this role does remind us she was the first Blanche Dubois on Broadway where she copped a Tony for that role back in 1948. Brimley, too, who was talked about as a possible nominee last year in a supporting role for *THE NATURAL*, seems a natural himself this time out because he's so movingly convincing as he wrestles with his decision to choose eternal life away from his beloved grandson.

But the others help these actors shine—from Don Ameche and his elan vital as the playboy winning the heart of Gwen Verdon to Jack Gilford (once nominated for *SAVE THE TIGER* in 1972) who eschews renewal even though the pool promises health for his failing wife Herta Ware. Gilford still elects to shuffle along the mortal coil rather than slip off in the spaceship even after his wife passes on.

Even the special effects, slickly and unobtrusively done by ILM, add visual drama to the delightful sexual encounter outer-space-style when Tahnee Welch offers Guttenberg the pleasures of *not* touching, and especially at the end in a spectacular light-infused ascension by one of those good old-fashioned flying saucers. But it's the acting and the story that add the touch of just enough emotion and suspense to make that heavenward flight work as well as it does at the end of E.T., even though it's predictable.

Howard and screenwriter Benedek demonstrate the skill of keeping just enough distance to prevent the film from lapsing into the maudlin, particularly in that final close-up: during the funeral for the boatload of elders now presumed drowned—the minister mentions that they have all gone on to a better world while the camera catches the ironic smile of the grandson so winningly played by Barrett Oliver.

It would be interesting, of course, to see whether the young senior citizens really end up liking it up there without the hope of an end-all and be-all to the inevitable disappointments and loneliness. But even without that consideration beyond Gilford's token resistance to godhood, Howard has clearly fashioned a fantasy full of the two things we look in vain for most both inside and outside the theatre—love and life. □



Geena Davis as Odette in *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000*, stalking sleeping Ed Begley, Jr.

## TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000

continued from page 10

Shore, Marty Feldman, Carol Burnett and *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000* cast member John Byner. Mel Brooks was the artist to have the biggest impact on DeLuca's career. DeLuca wrote two movies for Brooks, *SILENT MOVIE* and *HIGH ANXIETY*. DeLuca played the psycho killer in the latter, and had a small role in *HISTORY OF THE WORLD: PART I*.

It was when he wrote the Ringo Starr comedy, *CAVEMAN*, that DeLuca decided he wanted to direct as well. The *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000* project was just one of several that DeLuca shopped around. He admits that the 5 years of peddling the dog-eared script probably benefitted the finished product, as running around producers' suites acting it out honed down the limitations and refined the comedy.

Directing your first movie in a foreign country is obviously difficult, but DeLuca seemed to cope well despite the fact that the only Yugoslavian words he knew consisted of "toothpick" and "fuck off." With only a six week shooting schedule to accomplish what he had in his mind's eye, DeLuca was grateful for the crack crew Nuefeld assembled to assist him.

"I got to concentrate on getting the timing right and could change a scene when I saw it wasn't working," he said. "Thank heavens I didn't have any special effects to deal with! This picture will confound audiences' preconceived notions. It's not what they think it's going to be."

DeLuca is already mapping out plans for at least one sequel to *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000*. He also sees the re-release of *THE GLENN MILLER STORY* this summer as a good omen for awareness of the title. "I would like this to be the equivalent of the Abbott and Costello series," he said. "The concept of the two tabloid reporters sent out to do crazy stories offers unlimited opportunities. The Abominable Snowman. Flying Saucers. Anything. They could become the road films for this generation."

Visual consultant Steve Haber-

man was on board to help DeLuca make *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000*. Haberman, only 28, also worked on the vampire comedy *ONCE BITTEN* starring Lauren Hutton, which Haberman sees as *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000*'s main release rival.

"I only work with first time directors because they are the only ones who would need someone like me," said Haberman, who also worked on *BODY ROCK* and *GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN*, also for New World. Haberman joined the production in February and transformed the 160 page shooting script to storyboards.

"I worked from location photographs and maps and sketched everything DeLuca had in mind for the monsters," he said. "This was before we had a makeup man. The challenge with the Hunyadi character was to make him look as much like Frankenstein as we could without infringing any copyright. I always worked closely with DeLuca's input, but his prime concern was the comic timing and handling the actors."

Haberman, whose favorite genre movies were '30s Universal films found he had ample opportunity to incorporate those ideas and themes into the storyboards. "We are working with the classic Universal look of cobblestones and villagers with torches but dressing it cute in order to build to those moments where you catch a glimpse of the Transylvania we all know and love. In the limited time we have available, I'm trying to give the film the visual texture of a James Whale film. There is something here for everybody: the comedy fans and the buffs."

When Haberman first heard about the project, he hoped it wasn't going to be just a pale imitation of *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*. "I was so relieved when I realized DeLuca had crafted an '80s version of *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN*, with a slant that was very easy to live with. This is not a disrespectful lampoon at all in the way *THE MUNSTERS* was, or hip like *THE HUNGER*, but an affectionate view of the things we love about our genre heritage." □

## A VIEW TO A KILL

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unexpected moment is Bond's boudoir clinch with the energetic May Day, who glares at our hero and flips him onto his back so that she can straddle him. Bond's amusing submissiveness is the most peculiarly Roger Moore-ish moment in all of the actor's Bond outings; Sean Connery, tougher and more overtly masculine, could not have been as comfortably affable about May Day's aggressiveness. The shame is that Grace Jones—sexy, sleek, and provocative—was not cast as the female lead.

The Broccoli Bond pictures have not had a really splendid leading lady since Diana Rigg in 1969. Tanya Roberts is a spunky but unremarkable heroine who is as pretty and as flatly resolute as a Bond heroine is expected to be. Alas, she cannot rise above her material, and is at its mercy. Her frantic piloting of a speeding fire engine as Bond dangles from a freeswinging ladder might have been amusing if Roberts possessed a sense of comedy. As it stands, she just looks desperate. And Moore, clearly, is no farceur; the sequence is neither fun nor funny. Besides, it's so derivative as to be embarrassing: W.C. Fields, Buster Keaton, and many other comic actors did almost identical gags with far more success.

Until a genuinely exciting fire at San Francisco City Hall, *A VIEW TO A KILL* is bland and harmless—like a celery souffle made with skim milk. The fire snaps the picture out of low gear and promises better things ahead. But once underground at Zorin's combination mine and bomb epicenter, the action becomes nasty and excessive. Zorin electrocutes, explodes, and shoots what seem to be scores of men and women. The violence is particularly jarring because Christopher Walken brings an insidious understatement to the role. Zorin seems to have been bussed in from some other movie; he's too bluntly believable to bring a needed capriciousness to the violence here.

Still, the mine sequence is a rouser, as is the climactic confrontation of Bond and Zorin aboard Zorin's crippled airship. The stylistic debt that the Bond series owes to Alfred Hitchcock is particularly apparent during this harrowing battle at the summit of the Golden Gate bridge. We might have had a thoroughly enjoyable evening if the rest of the film had managed this deft balance of danger and whimsy.

Twenty years ago, the James Bond films were eagerly anticipated and seriously reviewed. Now they are treated like inconsequential trivia—which is what they have become. John Glen is a very capable action director, but he needs a cohesive script and a 007 who operates at more than 003½. Do you suppose Cubby Broccoli still has George Lazenby's phone number? □



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## MAD MAX

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desert wastes (convincingly played by South Australia) where he falls in with a tribe of Feral Kids inhabiting an Edenic Crack in the Earth (New South Wales' Blue Mountains).

With Max's entry into the kiddie oasis, THUNDERDOME moves from engrossing to magical. The depiction of the tribal community is a marvel of collaborative filmmaking, makeup, production design, dialogue, and ensemble performance all orchestrated for the same tune: the creation of a fully-formed culture. When the beautiful Savannah Nix (Helen Buday) declaims the tribe's creation myth, and the spell-bound children give their choral responses, one seems to be witnessing a genuine ceremony, a moving, ritual reenactment. It is an awesome cinematic achievement and the effect is thrilling. (For what it's worth, the film's production notes lead one to believe that the distribution of directorial labors had Miller attending mainly to formal, "cinematic" matters while Ogilvie was more involved with dramatic, "theatrical" elements.)

From netherworld sleaze to New World innocence, MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME manages to sail through more archetypal patterns than a Ph.D. dissertation on Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. The deeply structured narrative pilfers myth from Holy Scripture to Hollywood, and multiple media associations pack every scene. (If THE ROAD WARRIOR is a partial remake of John Ford's DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK, the new sequel's readiest reference is Robert Aldrich's THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX.) However, the most telling references are to its two forebearers. Eike the sparing of Blaster, Max's assumption of paternal responsibility toward the tribal children makes sense and gains emotional meaning only against the background of MAD MAX's loss.

Similarly, the brutality of Barter-town pales beside life under Lord Humongus: the juicy irony of Aunty's community motto—"building a better tomorrow"—is that it's true, she really is a civilizing influence. Disappointingly, this inter-textual resonance is missing from another, crucial relationship: Max and the Gyro Captain (here, inexplicably, called "Jedediah") exchange not so much as a nod of recognition.

But THUNDERDOME's loudest dissonant note is Tina Turner, who is jarringly out of place in this movie. From the standard issue '80s rock tune played over the opening credits to the better-than-standard issue '80s rock tune played over the closing credits, her presence, vocal and physical, is pure special effect, a corporate tie-in whose main justification is promotional. To be sure, she is very good in the role, but a pop star of her fame—her indelible asso-

ciation with the contemporary charts—can only transport a futuristic fantasy back to the present-day world of MTV and *People* magazine. The suspension of disbelief afforded the previous entries (aided, especially for an American viewer, by the utter unfamiliarity of the Australian supporting cast) is withheld at Turner's appearance. As a villainess too, her warmth as a pop performer belies her efforts to exude danger. (Wez did not have this problem.)

Equally unsatisfying is THUNDERDOME's concluding confrontation. THE ROAD WARRIOR's fourteen-minute finale is simply untopable: everyone knows that. Audaciously, Miller/Ogilvie seem to acknowledge as much by keeping Max wheel-less until the last reels. Ultimately, however, and with very little good grace, they succumb to generic expectations with a perfunctory chase scene that has less momentum than any passage in the film. Even the comic spills and hokey tumbles fall flat.

Despite a few wrong turns, though, THUNDERDOME is a remarkable film fully deserving of any overused superlatives and four-star ratings pasted on its advertising. After directing this and the flashiest fourth of THE TWILIGHT ZONE quartet, besting the stiffest of Hollywood's slick competition, director George Miller has skyrocketed up the auteurist hierarchy. BEYOND THUNDERDOME is no mere sequel lunging forward on inertia alone, the latest Mad Max is an enchanting continuation of an authentic modern saga.

## MY SCIENCE PROJECT

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part of the time warp where the Bowery Boys now reside. The bespectacled leading lady (Danielle von Zerneck) is at least sexy in a bookish way.

Some of the effects, however, supervised by John Scheele (with Ron Cobb designing the UFO gizmo), are literally breathtaking. When the school's hallways become a lethal entranceway for the time warp's inhabitants, we are treated to assorted mutants... and a rampaging dinosaur that may be the most convincing blend of animation and mechanization yet seen. And the time warp itself, funneling into the night sky, is highly effective.

But the best thing about MY SCIENCE PROJECT is Hopper as the ex-hippie science teacher, Mr. Roberts ("Call me Bob—only the pigs call me Mr. Roberts"). One suspects the film's writer/director, Jonathan Betuel, intended the role to be just another of the film's endless character cliches. But Hopper turns in a marvelously comic, yet disciplined performance. Indeed he gives the performance Christopher Lloyd *should* have given in BACK TO THE FUTURE.



# NIGHTMARE

continued from page 14

most sophisticated motion pictures audiences. You can't play down to them and you can't bullshit them." The director was greatly impressed by David Chaskin's screenplay for the new film.

Jacques Haikin is especially proud of the cinematography on NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II since a film processing accident had distorted his work on the original film. His dupe negative for the earlier picture was damaged by the lab, and the release prints came out with "decreased image sharpness and less rich color."

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II has "a more naturalistic look than the original film," said Haitkin. "There's more humor, including more visual humor. I've tried to create more of a comic book tone with dynamic angles and colorful, exaggerated uses of light. My technique is more refined."

Also more developed is the central character of Freddie. Robert Englund, the ebullient and articulate actor who plays America's favorite ghou, spoke candidly about his role. Englund is more than a bit surprised by the furor which Freddie has caused. Girls have even left let-



Freddie Krueger faces the flames again at the film's fiery climax. Mark Shostrom made a bust of Krueger's burnt husk for the sequence (inset).



ters and color snapshots of themselves made up as Freddie on the actor's Malibu doorstep.

Englund noted that much of the cat-and-mouse humor he brought to Freddie in the first film wound up on the proverbial cutting room floor. But that's not going to happen in NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II. "I play Freddie with much more satanic glee," he said. "Freddie will never find a resting place. He's already been to hell—now he's trapped on Elm Street. And he has to make the best of it."

The actor offered some insights into how he prepares for the role. In part, Englund looks to precedents in pop culture to help his characterization. He's thought about the popular, mysterious '40s radio and comic book character The Shadow, with what Englund describes as "his soft hat and melting look."

"And I try to play with the sub-

text," Englund said. "Freddie was a child molester, although that aspect of his nature was soft-pedaled in the first film." In fact, Englund has fleshed out in his imagination what he feels Freddie would have been like before his death (a side of the character which audiences haven't seen). Englund views Freddie as a sort of junior high school janitor with a nasty leer; "a misfit suffering from a Beau Brummel complex" who would wear sweaters and a fedora years after they were "stylish" to compensate for his own feelings of inferiority and isolation. To get further into his role, the actor concentrates on Freddie's costumes, which he believes give the character a kind of tacky, funny, but ultimately terrifying, "Damon Runyon timelessness."

For some of Freddie's darker motivations, Englund "uses my own personal envy of youth. I play off the young actors. Freddie mocks the kids in the film with his own childlike ridicule." Off screen though, Englund has the highest regard for his co-stars.

Englund also offered some very interesting thoughts about the meaning of Freddie and the NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET films. "Audiences release emotionally what we've all needed to get out of ourselves for centuries, whether in the Coliseum at Rome or the Grand Guignol in Paris. Through these films, the audience can come to terms with death. The NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET pictures can, on some levels, be seen as cathartic, religious, even a prurient release. The basic fears of death we all experience can be exorcised through these kinds of pictures."

Perhaps the most crucial element that Englund uses in bringing Freddie to life for himself and for audiences is Kevin Yagher's extraordinary new makeup. Yagher, only 23, has already worked on such films as DREAMSCAPE, FRIDAY THE 13TH: PART IV, RADIOACTIVE DREAMS, COCOON—for which he was one of Greg Cannom's principal assistants—and the new INVADERS FROM MARS. Yagher was assisted by Wendy Cooke and

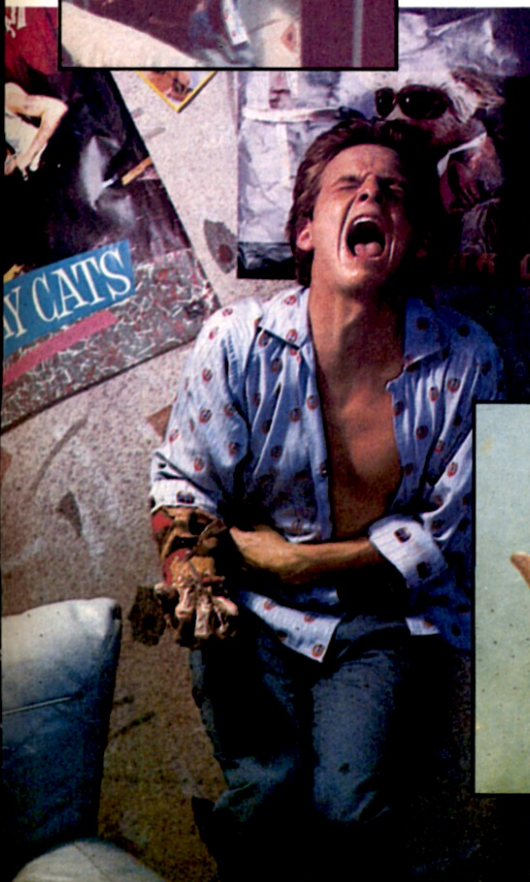
Earl Ellis in executing a dozen elaborate effects for Freddie as well as a gruesome assortment of victims.

Because of the film's tight shooting schedule, the producers hired another makeup artist, Mark Shostrom, to be in charge of a pivotal dramatic, and special effects sequence: the shockingly visceral, and bloodless transformation of Jesse into Freddie Krueger. Shostrom's work has appeared in VIDEO-DROME, THE BEASTMASTER, ANDROID, THE SUPERNATURALS, and the original A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET. This one effect, which consisted of dozens of interrelated components, required the help of Shostrom's four assistants, Bart J. Mixon, John Blake Dutro, Gregor Punctatz, and Anthony Showe, and others.

Everyone involved in A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, PART II hopes to make the sequel funnier more real, and more terrifying than the original. But they, and we, realize that they have quite an act to follow. But get ready, Freddie is about to doff his familiar fedora and unfurl his gleaming "finger-knives" again. Wherever we may live, at some time or another, we all sleep—and dream—on Elm Street. □



Mark Shostrom was in charge of the effects sequence where Freddie Krueger emerges from the body of Jesse (Mark Patton). A body double of Patton (inset top) was used for the shot where Krueger (Robert Englund) claws his way out. For the shot that begins the sequence, Shostrom fabricated a series of split arms (inset bottom) to show the action of Krueger's claws emerging and his sweater under the skin.



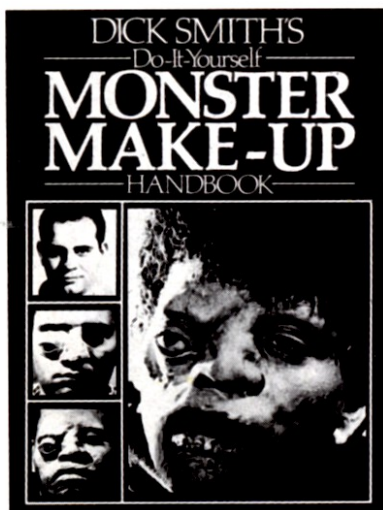
Mark Patton with Shostrom's effects tongue, signaling an early stage of the possession by Krueger. Tongue by Greg Punctatz, mechanics by Bart J. Mixon.





## MAKEUP TIPS FROM A PRO

Personally Autographed by author Dick Smith



A collector's item featuring sixteen step-by-step instructions on "Halloween" makeup applications for ages 6 to 60. This completely updated, revised edition includes an introduction by Rick Baker and text by Hollywood's premier makeup artist Dick Smith, whose credits include *THE EXORCIST*, *ALTERED STATES*, *SCANNERS* and many more. Smith gives would-be pros and curiosity seekers a do-it-yourself guide to basic techniques. Autographed copies are limited—first come first served. Paper, \$9.95.

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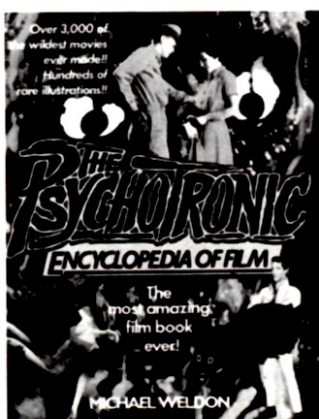
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## GRADE Z FILM CHECKLIST

Author Michael Weldon covers a wide variety of films that defy classification and creates his own unique category, "psychotronic films." This mini-review book covers traditional "B" movies like *BEACH BLANKET BINGO* and *BLOOD FEAST*, but doesn't stop there. Also included are the more off-beat cult classics like *ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES*. But, this is only the beginning as we hit the underground circuit with memorables such as *ERASER-HEAD*, and star vehicles like *PRETTY BABY* which launch the careers of models and future presidents. And Weldon hasn't forsaken the best (or worst) of horror, fantasy and science fiction films. Paper, profusely illustrated, \$16.95



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## SANTA CLAUS

continued from page 19

*MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* was remade as *MEET MR. KRINGLE* in 1956. It was directed by Robert Stevenson, who would later do many fantasy films for Disney. Originally made for TV, the film was shown theatrically in England. Thomas Mitchell starred as Kris Kringle, and the cast included MacDonald Carey, Teresa Wright, Sandy Descher, Hans Conreid, and Ray Collins.

Santa Claus was often the province of low-budget filmmakers. Mexico's Azteca Studios contributed a version of *SANTA CLAUS* in 1959. Their film included lots of gadgetry and portrayed Santa fighting a demon. *THE MIRACLE OF SANTA'S WHITE REINDEER* was a 60 minute live-action feature made in 1963 by Fantasy Films. The cast included Charles Winninger, Fritz Feld, Ruth Robinson, Dennis Holmes, and Hal Smith.

Joseph E. Levine released the Jalor production *SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS* in 1964. In this bizarre film, Santa Claus is kidnapped by Martians. Pia Zadora plays a Martian child (Girmar) who helps two Earth children rescue Santa Claus with a succession of toy weapons. That same year, Santa was again abducted, this time in the film *MAGIC CHRISTMAS TREE*. It was shot in and around Los Angeles, and the story involved three schoolboys, a witch and her cat, a magic ring, a giant, and the rescue of Santa Claus.

*THE CHRISTMAS THAT ALMOST WASN'T* (*IL NATALE CHE QUASI NON FU*) was made in Italy in 1965 and released in the United States by Childhood Productions. Rossano Brazzi directed and starred in the film as a "mean zillionaire" who tries to evict Santa. The cast also featured Paul Tripp, Lidia Brazzi, Alberto Rabagliati (Santa), and Mischa Auer.

*SANTA'S CHRISTMAS CIRCUS* was made in Kansas City, Missouri in 1966. The cast included Frank Wiziard as Whizzo the Clown, John Bilyeu as Santa Claus, and children from the Johnny Miller Dance Studio as assorted circus animals. Whizzo takes some children to the North Pole on a flying carpet to visit with Santa, who introduces them to his elves in their workshop.

In 1967, J. Edwin Baker produced *SANTA VISITS THE MAGIC LAND OF MOTHER GOOSE*. Virtually nothing is known about the film, which was shown in Baltimore in 1974 and ran 60 minutes.

*RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER* (1967) was made as a TV special by Rankin/Bass with animated puppets and songs by Johnny Marks, based on a story by Robert May. Numerous Rankin-Bass TV specials (often with voices by Burl Ives and Paul Frees) have featured Santa Claus. In fact, until recently, TV has provided a more frequent



Jan Rubes and Elizabeth Harnois in Walt Disney's *ONE MAGIC CHRISTMAS*, opening a week before *SANTA CLAUS*.

home for Santa Claus than the motion picture theatre.

In a different vein, Fleetan Films made a sex-fantasy in 16 mm called *SANTA IS COMING* (1969). One of the characters is a "midget fairy."

A 63 minute animated feature was made by R & S Film Enterprises in 1970 called *SANTA AND THE THREE BEARS*, about bear cubs who want to meet Santa. In 1972 the company returned with a sequel called *SANTA AND THE ICE CREAM BUNNY*. That same year Finest Films got a G-rating for their film, *SANTA AND THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN*.

In 1973, *MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* was cranked out (for a third time) by 20th Century-Fox. This version was made for TV and starred Sebastian Cabot as Kris Kringle. Jane Alexander, David Hartman, Roddy McDowall, Jim Backus, and Tom Bosley were also in the cast.

New World Pictures released the French film *HERE COMES SANTA* in 1984. Santa Claus (Armand Mefre) helped seven year-old Simon (Emeric Chapuis) find his parents, who vanished while on holiday in Africa. While Santa is away, Simon and a friend are captured by an Ogre (Dominique Hulin) who threatens to eat them.

This Christmas, Walt Disney Productions is providing some competition for *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE*. Disney is releasing *ONE MAGIC CHRISTMAS* a week earlier than the rival Salkind production. The Disney film features effective Santa Claus sequences, including a few minutes at the North Pole, and is directed by Phillip Borsos (who made *THE GREY FOX*). The cast includes Mary Steenburgen, Harry Dean Stanton as an angel, Jan Rubes as Santa, Elizabeth Harnois, and Abbie Gideon. □



## LEGEND MAKEUP

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planned to utilize a mechanical apparatus to de-humanize the eye space, creating a cat-like triangle with the eyes and mouth; however, the concept was abandoned when Tim Curry was cast.

"We talked about his character, and the only problem Tim had was using the eye apparatus. He told me he'd wear any poundage of rubber or submit to anything as long as I used his eyes. So I checked it out with Ridley, and we decided the mechanical eyes would probably be great but how could we top Tim Curry's eyes?"

"Curry was in good shape, but not like a figure from a Frazetta painting, so we built muscles for his arms, shoulders, back, and chest. Ridley wanted Darkness to be elegant, handsome, and seductively sinister, so this Schwarzenegger-body had to look very gaunt and sleek. Aesthetically, it's a contradiction, but we had to make it work."

Curry also had to wear a huge, bull-like structure atop his head, with three-foot horns of fiberglass supported by a harness beneath the makeup. No matter how light, the horns placed a strain on the back of the neck because they extended forward, not straight up.

"These things as light as an envelope were still too heavy. We went to a vacu-form with such a thin mill it sometimes would suck down into the horn mold and leave a giant hole. When we finally got some lightweight horns and painted them—even the paint made them heavier! People think, 'Just put some horns on—that'll be easy.' Now I know, *nothing's easy!*"

Filming the characters was a "never-ending battle." Once the actors reached the set they were supposed to be treated like ordinary performers, not walking special effects. As soon as Scott yelled 'cut!' members of Bottin's makeup crew would take a couple of minutes to check them out.

"Each had a squad that would descend immediately. I'd say, 'Put more sweat here,' or 'Tim's lips are fading.' Being a perfectionist, two minutes was never enough. That to me was a bit of a frustration, not a complaint at all, compared to *THE THING* where we shot in a post-production atmosphere. It's a total difference between prosthetic makeup that works on actors and doing monster stuff."

Despite the difficulty and frustration, Bottin would love to tackle a project like this again. "I feel a certain pride now that I know how a movie of this size can be done and how I can improve it. An incredible amount of knowledge was gained by doing this. I used every hour and second—everything I had—to get *LEGEND* done, and I still had to learn from mistakes. But that's true of every job, and anybody that says otherwise is fooling himself." □



Rob Bottin was hired for *EXPLORERS* because of his unique ability to come up with outrageous, off-the-wall makeup concepts. Left: The giant adult alien Neek, the alien femme fatale with River Phoenix.

## Rob Bottin on *EXPLORERS* makeup and working with Joe Dante

The makeup assignment Rob Bottin took-on after *LEGEND* actually got released first. *EXPLORERS* called for one bizarre but benevolent boy alien, Wak, his rather nubile teenage sister Neek and their irate, blue-collar father who comes storming through the cosmos to drag his irresponsible offspring home.

Bottin got a midnight call from *EXPLORERS* producer Mike Finnell when he was still in London, finishing up two years of remarkable work on Ridley Scott's *LEGEND*. "We want something really outrageous," Finnell told Bottin. "That's why we called you."

"Wak had such a great personality in the script that I thought it would be even funnier if he looked kind of dopey and clumsy, but still had a lot of charm and character," said Bottin. "He has a green, goofy-looking bug body and Daffy Duck feet with giant pizza slices cut out of them, and long toes and fingers with suction cups at the ends. I love pulp science fiction, so we put big tentacle eyes on top of his head." The suction cup fingers served as an in-joke reference to the Mar-

tians seen in George Pal's *WAR OF THE WORLDS* (1953).

"Dante wanted the aliens to dress like teenagers from outer space," said Bottin. "Both aliens seem fairly huge—but when their father shows up, he is like King Kong. He looks like Wak at 50, and with his toolbelt, longjohns and beard stubble, you know he works for a living."

For Bottin the object of makeup effects is to out-wit the audience. "When you set out to create something, you have to imagine it becoming real, almost surreal," he said. "If it doesn't look believable your efforts are wasted. That's why I

go through agony over details—to be able to say, 'Yes, it's alive.' If a kid comes up to me and says, 'Wow! I don't know how you did that!', that's the ultimate compliment. If you can't fool a kid you're in big trouble."

"The beauty of the makeups for *EXPLORERS* is that they are half human and half mechanical," Bottin continued. "The innovation was to use the actor's body and the lower part of his face, to take advantage of the human characteristics. In order to make them look really alien we changed the placement of their eyes, which don't quite live up to human movement, but come pretty close."

But Bottin prides himself most as a conceptual artist, not a technician. "I'm hired for my imagination," he said. "When I get calls from filmmakers they usually say, 'I have an idea, but I don't quite know what I want.'"

Said *EXPLORERS* director Joe Dante, who used Rob Bottin on both *THE HOWLING* and *TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE*, "Bottin and I have a great relationship. I had no idea what he would deliver for this movie—but then, I never do." □

Wak, performed by frequent Bottin collaborator Robert Picardo.





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(painting by Roger Stine)



**Gort & Klaatu**  
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**King, Romero, & Savini**  
(photo by Paul R. Gagne)



**David Cronenberg**  
(photo by Bob Villard)



**Rob Bottin**  
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**Dick Smith**  
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## NOME KING

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to camouflage the filaments they still showed on the film. That was no good and Murch told us to try something else. On the fourth try—and the one which finally succeeded—I placed a large sheet of glass directly behind the set. Then I simply stuck the crumbs of clay on the glass. This required extraordinary attention to keeping the glass clean, but in the end it worked.

"My set looked like a NASA control room," Aberle continued. "I had a complex network of lighting to assure that the lights went up and down at the right time. Cameras, of course. Then I needed a projector for the live-action and monitors for the reference footage and for tracking the clay. I think I would consult as many as six different screens before shooting one frame of film."

Gary Kurtz, the executive producer of RETURN TO OZ, called the Claymation Nome King a real showstopper, and Murch is delighted with all of the special effects in the film. "It is a very classy, very entertaining movie," said Maslansky, "and I have extraordinary admiration for Will Vinton. He is a brilliant film technician and a wonderful creative artist."

Considering the tedious years spent experimenting and sculpting with clay the color of rock, it is no wonder the animators occasionally slipped some color into the world of the nomes on footage intended for their eyes only. The daily rushes included live-action sequences, reference film, and Claymation—plus an occasional non sequitur.

"There is always that little bit of film at the beginning or end of a sequence which will be cut off," said Aberle. "You just can't help yourself sometimes." At Christmas the Nome King wore a Santa Claus hat and another time it was a pair of glasses with a fake nose. Then there was the day he ate an M&M's wrapper. One day he was even visited by a refugee from THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN when a deliciously green frog appeared magically on his lap.

Vinton is currently in preproduction on his second feature-length Claymation film, ILLUSIONS, a musical which children will enjoy but which really is more of an adult piece. After the tremendous success of the Nome King, everyone at Will Vinton Productions is eagerly awaiting the world premier of THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN in next year.

"We're just as excited about Twain as we are about our work in RETURN TO OZ," said Vinton. "We use many, many techniques to keep the methodology behind our illusions hidden. We always try to tell a good story and we avoid using the same trick twice. That's what makes Claymation so entertaining. Essentially, we are magicians: our job is to hide the rabbit." □

## THE BODY SNATCHER

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THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS to director of Lewton's 1944 THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE. Wise's first solo directorial credit had been MADEMOISELLE FIFI, a Lewton "pet" project based on De Maupassant stories. Lewton was immensely proud of him, and the two men had great affection for each other.

To write the screenplay, Lewton asked Gross for \$1000-per-week Michael Hogan, who had worked on such scripts as REBECCA (United Artists, 1940) and ARABIAN NIGHTS (Universal, 1942). "... I feel sure that THE BODY SNATCHER with Karloff, Hogan and Bob Wise is a winning set-up," wrote Lewton. However, for reasons not clear in the RKO archives, Gross rejected Hogan, as well as Lewton's secondary choices Dana Burnet, Byron Morgan, Eugene Vale, Lillie Hayward, and Fanya Lawrence. Instead, Philip MacDonald got the job. MacDonald had provided the stories for such acclaimed films as RKO's THE LOST PATROL (1934) and Columbia's SAHARA (1943), as well as a few of 20th Century Fox's MR. MOTO films.

Then RKO received a shock of its own. On September 8, 1944, Lewton sent the "estimating script" for THE BODY SNATCHER to the almighty Breen Office, 5504 Hollywood Blvd., for its obligatory blessing. The Breen Office, the industry's self-regulating censor, replied on September 27:

**We have read with close attention your estimating script of September 8, for your proposed picture THE BODY SNATCHER, and regret to advise that this story is unacceptable under the provisions of the code, because of the repellant nature of such matter, which has to do with grave-robbing, dissecting bodies, and pickling bodies... the undue gruesomeness which would unavoidably be attached to the picturization of such scenes could in no wise be approved...**

Lewton was in a quandry: Jack Gross had demanded gore, and now the Breen Office demanded all the gore removed. Since Breen counseled that the film's only chance was "... some new locales, away from dead bodies, and new dialogue situations..." Lewton himself went back to work on the script. He developed further the romance between Fettes and the Widow Marsh, and eventually wrote all of the final screenplay himself. Philip MacDonald, meanwhile, not trusting his producer's writing acumen, demanded that Lewton share the blame if the film flopped. Hence, under his old pseudonym of "Carlos Keith," Lewton took his first screenplay credit while succeeding in appeasing the Breen Office.

Lewton wanted THE BODY



SNATCHER to be "special," hoping for an impressive cast. His previous films had relied on low to moderately priced RKO contract talent. Citing Universal's 1941 *THE WOLF MAN* (which boasted Claude Rains, Ralph Bellamy, Warren William, Bela Lugosi, and Maria Ouspenskaya, as well as Chaney Jr. and Evelyn Ankers), Lewton hoped RKO would finance a high-priced cast. With a few notable exceptions, this wasn't to be.

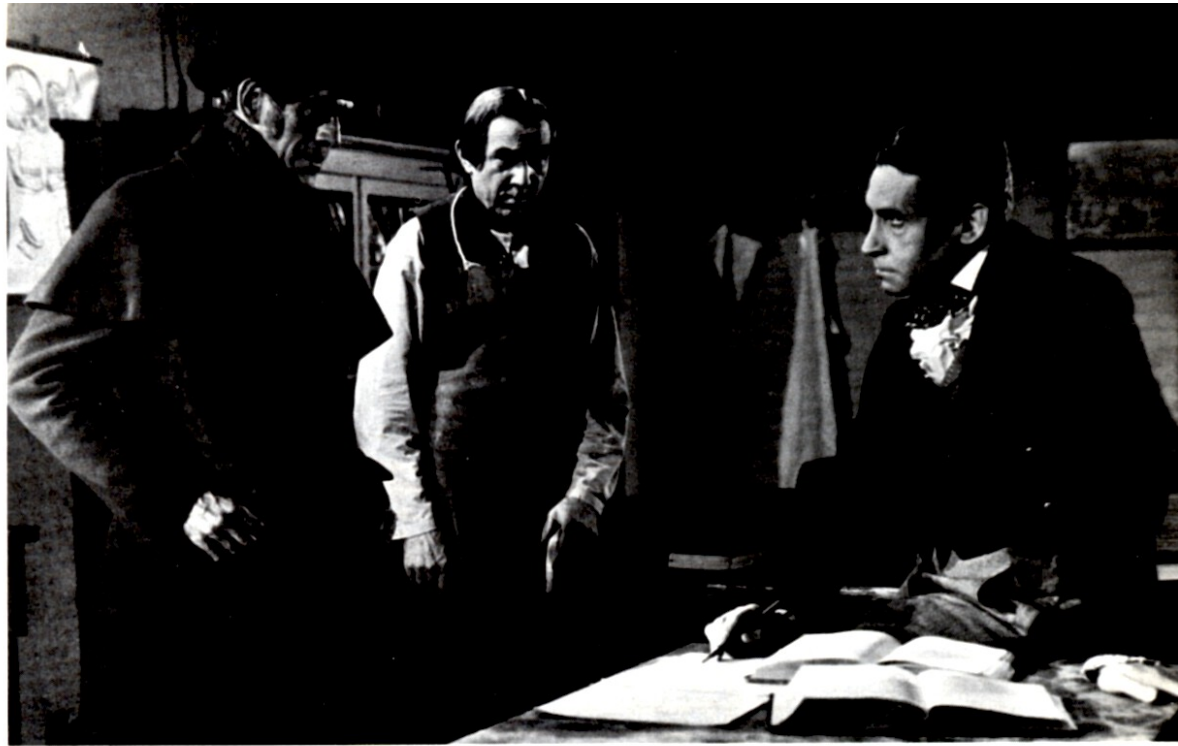
For John Gray, the "Body Snatcher," Karloff was the one and only choice. However, also an actor's dream was the part of Dr. "Toddy" MacFarlane, the proud, cold anatomy teacher haunted by Gray. Lewton and company came up with a variety of ideas for this key part: Albert Dekker, the tall, husky character actor, best remembered as *DR. CYCLOPS* (Paramount, 1940); John Emery, a John Barrymore look-alike who had played in Lewton's *MADMOISELLE FIFI*, and whose chief fame was as the only husband (from 1937 to 1941) of Tallulah Bankhead; George Coulouris, the snitty Walter Parks Thatcher who dragged little Charles Foster Kane away from his sled "Rosebud" in *CITIZEN KANE*; Philip Merivale, a distinguished character actor who had also starred as "Death" in Broadway's 1929 *DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY*, and was then playing supporting parts at RKO; and Alan Napier, the 6'5" English actor (and a very close friend to Lewton) who had played in Lewton's *MADMOISELLE FIFI* and *CAT PEOPLE*, as well as in Paramount's 1943 *THE UNINVITED*.

In the end, all these gentlemen lost to Henry Daniell, the incisive Englishman whose sly, foxy Baron de Varville had so deliciously agonized Garbo's *CAMILLE* (MGM, 1937). Daniell was one of the era's great unsung movie villains, be he duelling with Errol Flynn in *THE SEA HAWK* (Warner Bros, 1940) or causing Charlie Chaplin to delete his best scene as Nazi "Garbitsch" (Chaplin feared that Daniell was funnier than he was!) in *THE GREAT DICTATOR* (United Artists, 1940). Daniell was something of a mystery in Hollywood.

"Henry Daniell was a nice man—we got on well—but he was a crazy man," said Alan Napier, who lost out to Daniell for the role in *THE BODY SNATCHER*. "He believed in the devil, and that sort of thing. He had a belief in the powers of evil. He used to come up here to Pacific Palisades and walk the beach at night... I can tell you one thing he lacked—warmth."

Ironically, these peculiar traits of fear and coldness made him perfect for the tragic MacFarlane. On October 24, 1944, Daniell signed a freelance contract with RKO to play Dr. MacFarlane for \$1,500 per week with a 2-week guarantee.

RKO's Russell Wade (who had co-starred with Richard Dix in Lew-



Cabman Gray (Boris Karloff) pays a call on his old friend Dr. MacFarlane (Henry Daniell) as Joseph (Bela Lugosi) eavesdrops.

ton's 1943 film, *THE GHOST SHIP*) was the sole choice for Donald Fettes, MacFarlane's conscience-troubled assistant. For Fettes' romantic interest, the Widow Marsh, contractee Rita Corday won the part over contenders Gwen Crawford and Audrey Long. For her crippled daughter Georgina, Lewton and Wise cast Sharyn Moffet, an appealing little girl who surpassed first choice Ann Carter (who had played so memorably in *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE*). For Meg, MacFarlane's lusty, lower-class wife who must masquerade as a housekeeper to appease her husband's social vanity, Lewton signed Edith Atwater, one of his favorite actresses; for Mrs. MacBride, whose son's body is stolen by Gray, he signed Mary Gordon (who had been tossed into the waters of the burned windmill by Karloff's Monster in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and, more recently, tidied up after Basil Rathbone as Mrs. Hudson in Universal's *Sherlock Holmes* series).

The part of Josef (as it was originally spelled) wasn't even discussed in the casting brainstorm session. Nor did it appear in Stevenson's story. "The whole part of Joseph," said Robert Wise, "actually was created to accommodate the casting of Lugosi." Contrary to some reports, Lugosi (whom Jack Gross very much wanted for the film because of the commercial potential of linking Lugosi's name with Karloff's) was never considered for the co-starring part of MacFarlane.

"... We never considered giving Lugosi the role of MacFarlane," said Wise. "He didn't have the right quality for it, and he certainly didn't have the acting talent to have provided the acting 'duel' that Henry Daniell had with Boris Karloff..."

These were unhappy times for the

aging Bela Lugosi. His wife Lillian had separated from him (they soon reconciled, but divorced in 1953), taking 6 year-old Bela Jr. and leaving her spouse alone in their "Dracula House" in North Hollywood. He was drinking heavily. And he was a very sick man. For it was in the summer of 1944 that Lugosi began taking drugs for leg pains, and now—accidentally, pathetically—he was an addict.

Desperate for money, Lugosi signed to play Joseph on October 25, 1944. His contract was a 1-page, 2-sided freelance form, promising \$3,000 per week on a 1-week guarantee—as opposed to Karloff's 32-page, \$6,000 per week star pact. On the same Wednesday that Lugosi signed, *THE BODY SNATCHER* officially began shooting.

"The shooting schedule on *THE BODY SNATCHER* was someplace in the area of 18 to 20 days," said Robert Wise. "The budget was around \$180,000 to \$200,000—I can't be exact—but close to that."

To suggest the desired atmosphere, Lewton showed Hogarth paintings to his director, stars, and cameraman Robert De Grasse (cinematographer of Lewton's 1943 film, *THE LEOPARD MAN*), and discussed Stevenson's literary mood. Because of the paltry budget, Lewton's ever-resourceful art directors Albert S. D'Agostino (formerly at Universal, where he was a set designer for *WEREWOLF OF LONDON*, *THE RAVEN*, *THE INVISIBLE RAY*, and *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER*) and Walter Keller revamped a set from the Hedy Lamarr/George Brent *EXPERIMENT PERILOUS* for the anatomy classroom, while exteriors from RKO's 1939 Laughton version of *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* became 1831 Edinburgh.

All in all, it was a happy set on

RKO's Soundstage 4, and the acting sparks instantly began to fly. Said Robert Wise, "Karloff was a delight to work with—very responsive, very professional. He was particularly keen about doing *THE BODY SNATCHER*. Karloff felt it was his first opportunity to really show what he could do as an actor, a fine actor of great skill and great depth."

In high spirits over his plum role, Karloff became a favorite with the company. Karloff's offbeat sense of humor, and his joy in poking fun at himself, often was on display. One day RKO treated a squad of soldiers to a studio tour, and ushered them onto the set of *THE BODY SNATCHER*. The men were thrilled at the prospect of seeing the great Boris Karloff, and as Wise called "Action!" Karloff made his entrance, in top hat and with a "body" over his shoulder, grinning wickedly at the camera. As soon as Wise called "Cut!" Karloff merrily plopped down the dummy, looked at the awestruck troops and smiled, "Goddammit, this thing is heavy!"

Karloff's sparring scenes with Henry Daniell held the company spellbound. "Daniell was a pro," said Karloff years later, "an honest-to-goodness pro. There was no rubbish with him, no faking." Russell Wade found the challenge of playing with Daniell a formidable one: "It was very hard for me to keep up with Henry Daniell, a very fine actor, and on the cold side as a person." Indeed, the rather imperious Daniell could easily overawe a novice player—and he overawed Robert Clarke, who played the bit part of Richardson, a medical student.

"This incident speaks so well of Mr. Wise, who tried to make you feel at ease," said Clarke, who later starred in *THE MAN FROM PLANET X* and *THE HIDEOUS SUN DEMON* (which he also pro-



## Cast & Credits

An RKO-Radio release. 5/45. 78 mins. Directed by Robert Wise. Produced by Val Lewton. Screenplay by Philip MacDonald and Carlos Keith (Val Lewton), based on Robert Louis Stevenson's 1885 short story of same title. Executive Producer, Jack Gross. Director of photography, Robert De Grasse. Editor, J.R. Whitledge. Art directors, Albert S. D'Agostino and Walter E. Keller. Set decorators, Darrell Silvera and John Sturtevant. Music composed by Roy Webb. Musical director, C. Bakaleinikoff. Costumes by Renie. Sound recordist, Bailey Fesler. Sound re-recordist, Terry Kellum. Assistant director, Harry Scott.

Gray ..... Boris Karloff  
Joseph ..... Bela Lugosi  
Dr. MacFarlane ..... Henry Daniell  
Meg ..... Edith Atwater  
Fettes ..... Russell Wade  
Mrs. Marsh ..... Rita Corday  
Georgina ..... Sharyn Moffett  
Street Singer ..... Donna Lee Richardson  
Richardson ..... Robert Clarke  
Gilchrist ..... Carl Kent  
Student ..... Bill Williams  
Mrs. MacBride ..... Mary Gordon  
Boy ..... Jack Welch  
Salesman ..... Larry Wheat  
Angus ..... Jim Moran  
Maid ..... Aina Constant

duced, directed and co-wrote). "I was just beginning my work on THE BODY SNATCHER, the scene where Henry Daniell is operating on the little girl. The scene really belonged to Daniell, a polished, very accomplished actor, and not too interested in the 'young anatomy student' actors who were really window-dressing for his scene.

"I arrived on the set about 10 minutes late—I got caught in traffic or something. 'This is not good, Bobby, being late,' said Wise, who placed me into the scene they were setting up. Well, I had such stage fright, and was so nervous about being late, that when the cue came for my line, I was too scared to say it! Henry Daniell walked right over me and kept delivering his lines. Bob Wise stopped him. He said to Daniell, 'Wait a minute. Let Bobby say his line.' Daniell was very courteous, and I always felt a warmth and appreciation that Wise made sure I got in my line!"

Val Lewton, meanwhile, was personally involved in every aspect of the production. He supervised the recording of street-singer Donna Lee's Scottish songs, and even monitored the application of her lipstick, so as to suggest the period rather than the 1940's. No prop escaped his scrutiny; at one point, he argued that a prop candle holder was a *miner's* candle holder—not a medical student's. Of course, Lewton was still battling "Mr. Gross," as he patronizingly referred to his executive producer. Just before shooting had begun, Gross wrote a memo to Lewton, dated October 20, 1944 (Lugosi's 62nd birthday) . . .

"I think it is quite important that you give Bela Lugosi a definite characterization. In one of the Franken-

stein pictures he played a hunchback with a muff, which made him a terrifying looking character. This is merely a suggestion," signed "J.G."

Lewton archly replied: "Okay. We'll hump him," and signed "Val."

Slightly humped, hair parted in the middle, manner slovenly, Lugosi made an unnerving Joseph. However, as Wise soon discovered, his only problems weren't the \$200,000 budget, nor the leftover sets, nor the rapid shooting schedule. He had to extract a performance from an aging, ailing, drug-handicapped and sometimes hungover Lugosi, whom Russell Wade remembers as "pretty far gone . . . kind of in another world . . . not with it . . . [and] seeming very old."

"It was a case of having to work very carefully with him," said Wise. "He certainly was willing, but I found getting my thoughts and ideas over to him took more time. He was a little slower grasping what the director wanted than Karloff. Karloff was very quick and very keen."

Of course, THE BODY SNATCHER was a painful situation for the proud Lugosi, and one obvious to the entire company. Here was old rival Karloff, chewing the scenery in a marvelous role; here was Lugosi, playing his stooge. "Certainly, at this point, Karloff was the star," said Robert Clarke. "He had a picture deal at RKO, and then they dragged poor Bela in to do this featured part, and not much of a part at that.

"Lugosi was quite ill, and he was not very communicative," continued Clarke. "He talked very little to anyone. He was off by himself, and spent a lot of his time lying flat on his back in his dressing room. When the assistant director called him, he came out and did his stuff. But he looked bad."

Certainly, Lugosi's old dislike of Karloff now aggravated his professional shortcomings. Playing with Karloff, Lugosi would lose his character and blow his lines so often that the genial Wise became embarrassed asking for retakes. Had Karloff seriously pursued the "rivalry" over the years, he might have delighted in seeing his humbled colleague forgetting simple lines and requiring many "takes," but such was not his style; "He was too much of a gentleman," said Wise. Instead, Karloff did all he could to be friendly to Lugosi, even though he had always sensed the angry bitterness that his Hungarian co-star harbored for him.

Of course, the two actors worked carefully together in the famous murder scene in which Gray adds Joseph to his list of victims. It was a scene indicative of the stars' own situations: as Lugosi's Joseph sits in a chair with dense expression and limited dialogue, Karloff's Gray dances around him, singing a ditty, plying his victim with liquor, mesmerizing Joseph and the audience.

As a final indignity, Gray, merrily humming his Burke and Hare ditty, carries Joseph's carcass into Mac-

Farlane's cellar and tosses it into a brine vat. Later, in a particularly ghoulish scene for 1945, MacFarlane discovers the head beneath the brine, and he pulls it up out of the vat and into a camera closeup. It couldn't be done with a "double," and "poor Bela" had to submerge his ailing self under the brine.

"He did it willingly as any good professional would," said Wise. "We had no problem—I think I had to make it only once or twice."

Of course, the classic shock sequence of THE BODY SNATCHER is the climax, as MacFarlane, having stolen the body of an old woman from a forsaken country cemetery, rides his carriage home with Fettes on a stormy night, fears he hears the taunting voice of Gray, and pulls the shroud off the body—to discover Gray's ghastly white cadaver. The rainy episode thoroughly drenched Karloff, Daniell and Wade, the last playing the scene despite being very ill with a high fever. (RKO was so grateful to Wade for not holding up production that the studio sent him to recuperate in Palm Springs, where, today, he's a very successful real estate agent.) Years later, Karloff was asked what the makeup department had sprayed on him to make his body so horribly luminous in that vignette.

"I really can't recall," said Karloff. "But you can be sure that it was something foul!"

On Friday, November 17, 1944, THE BODY SNATCHER completed shooting. "At the end of the picture, I went to the set to the 'Wrap Party,'" said bit player Robert Clarke. "Karloff was there, and he was graciously signing, for anyone who wanted one, an 8x10 photograph of himself. I still have the picture he signed for me, and it gives you an idea of the man's modesty. It reads, 'To Bob Clarke—Be as lucky as I am.'"

Exactly 2 weeks after THE BODY SNATCHER completed shooting, Mark Robson resumed filming ISLE OF THE DEAD (December 1 thru 12, 1944). As such, Lewton and Karloff immediately focused their energy elsewhere.

Still, both men held great hopes

for THE BODY SNATCHER. Lewton loved the film's "Stevensonian mold" and anticipated wonderful box office. So delighted was Karloff with his RKO friends (and vice versa) that he signed a new RKO 3-picture contract worth \$100,000 on January 17, 1945. After taking off for a tour of the Pacific Islands in a G.I. version of "Arsenic and Old Lace," Karloff wrote to RKO and asked for two 16mm prints of THE BODY SNATCHER to entertain the troops.

In the meantime, Roy Webb, who had provided the music for all of Lewton's horror films, added a beautifully moody score. And Lewton, who loved ending films with a literary quote, added this epilogue to THE BODY SNATCHER, courtesy of Hippocrates: "It is through error that man tries and rises. It is through tragedy he learns. All the roads of learning begin in darkness and go out into the light."

On Tuesday, February 13, 1945, RKO previewed THE BODY SNATCHER for the trade press at the studio. *The Hollywood Reporter* gave it "a rave":

"... an unqualified lulu, certain to satisfy the most ardent chill-and-thrill craver, for this is about as grisly an affair as the screen has ever ventured to offer . . . a veritable orgy of killing and grave-robbing . . . Karloff plays the title role with his sardonic humor which makes his performance doubly effective . . . Henry Daniell gives an excellent portrayal which carries conviction . . . Bela Lugosi appears briefly as a sinister servant who falls victim to his own cupidity . . . Robert Wise gave the picture distinctive direction . . . for Val Lewton, this is another top production credit . . ."

Delighted by the trade reviews, RKO set the release date for May and mounted a deluxe promotional campaign. Although *Variety* had warned that the film was "... a bit too much on the ghoulish side . . . for the weaker-stomached among patrons," RKO's advertising department enjoyed a horrid field day. "Foul Fingers Crimson With Dead Men's Blood!" shrieked one poster; "... Midnight Murder!

Director Robert Wise (left), Mark Robson and producer Val Lewton (right) at RKO.







**THE CLIMAX:** MacFarlane uncovers the shroud on the corpse he has placed in his carriage; in the pouring rain he sees the glistening face of the dead and long-dissected Gray; his horse bolts, and as the carriage races off, the terrorstruck doctor feels Gray jostling next to him.

Stalking Ghouls!" promised another. Most featured a morbidly tantalizing episode not even in the film: a sketch of Karloff, dragging a ghastly white but well-endowed female cadaver from its grave!

Karloff alone received top-billing, above the title, on the film's credits and all promotional materials. Lugosi, despite his role being virtually a "cameo" and Henry Daniell's superb performance, topped the below-the-title players, as his contract promised.

Robert Wise dismissed the inequity: "This was another of Jack Gross' ideas and his kind of thinking about horror films," said Wise. "He thought it would be a great idea to 'team' Karloff and Lugosi. Lugosi was put up there with second billing purely for commercial reasons, even though the part that Henry Daniell had was really the co-starring part with Karloff."

Finally, on Thursday, May 10, 1945, RKO premiered *THE BODY SNATCHER* at Hollywood's Hawaii Theatre. Not only did the film enjoy the support of a second feature (RKO's *THE BRIGHTON STRANGLER*), but there was also a special grave-robbing display in the lobby, and a live prologue on the Hawaii stage, in which a ghoul (actor Eric Jason) sought a live patron to pop into his coffin! The result was a sensation, as *THE BODY SNATCHER* smashed all first-week attendance records at the 956-seat theatre.

"It was a real 'audience picture,'" recalled Russell Wade. "Some of those scenes, as directed by Robert Wise—such as the sudden snort of the horse, and Karloff's murder of the street singer—got tremendous audience reaction." The terrifying climax, of course, always inspired cacophonies of wild screaming, such as movie exhibitors hadn't heard since the original release of *FRANKENSTEIN*.

Audiences also enjoyed the film's mordant dashes of humor. For example, there was a scene in the tavern where a drunk MacFarlane

says to Gray, "... You know something about the human body," and the Body Snatcher slyly smiles, "I've had some experience." "That," reported *The Hollywood Citizen-News*, "brought down the house!"

As RKO rejoiced, however, a problem suddenly loomed: censorship. On May 15, 1945, Sid Kramer reported to RKO that *THE BODY SNATCHER* had been "... condemned in its entirety by the city of Chicago and the state of Ohio, but with certain eliminations to be made, an adult permit at least will be forthcoming for Chicago. As for Ohio, a cut version of the picture has to be submitted for further consideration..."

Of course, such travails only gave the film notoriety, and *THE BODY SNATCHER* became Val Lewton's greatest critical and popular success since *CAT PEOPLE*. Karloff won some of the finest reviews of his career for his performance in *THE BODY SNATCHER*, and launched himself as one of the late '40s top character stars. Karloff praised Lewton as "the man who rescued me from the living dead and restored my soul."

*THE BODY SNATCHER* reigns as the richest, most dramatic of Val Lewton's RKO horrors. It has the power of a haunting ballad, and the literacy, taste and atmosphere of Lewton at his finest. Yet it also dramatically sings, due to Karloff's evil Gray and Daniell's tragic MacFarlane. While most of Lewton's films feature merely competent performances which play muted fiddle to the mood and style, *THE BODY SNATCHER* has mood and style, plus two bravura performances.

In his top hat, scraggly sideburns, and wicked smile, Karloff's Gray is the stuff great nightmares are made of as he makes his "crawling graveyard rat" one of the most mesmerizing villains in screen history. Kind to the little crippled girl, considerate of his horse, flashing merry eyes and a bright smile, Karloff's "Cabman Gray" can't even deliver a corpse west of midnight without tossing out a jolly "He was as bright and lively as a thrush not a week long gone!" However, we soon see the eyes their merriest and the smile its brightest when he's verbally skinning MacFarlane.

Who can forget Gray's sick pride

as he viciously jabs a knife into a loaf of bread and leers, "Toddy'd like to do that all over my body!" Yet, under the villainy, there's a fascinating element of self-hatred, which boils in his final taunt to MacFarlane:

"I am a small man, a humble man, and being poor, I've had to do so much that I did not want to do. But so long as the great Dr. MacFarlane jumps at my whistle, that long am I a man—and if I have not that, I have nothing. Then I am only a cabman and a graverobber. You'll never get rid of me, Toddy!"

And, to complete the character, master horror star Karloff garnishes Gray with gallows humor and an aura of deep, unholy, almost Lovecraftian evil, that makes his classic, climactic apparition all the more horrific.

Henry Daniell makes a proud, virile, clever and cold MacFarlane, with a palpable hatred for Gray that presents his "Toddy" as striking, sympathetic and thoroughly tragic. It is an exceptional star performance from an underrated character player. As for Bela Lugosi, his Joseph is a genuinely effective portrayal, vile and creepy and far more creatively played than the mad doctors he was then barnstorming for Monogram. The film did little, however, to boost Lugosi's career.

All of the cast is fine: Edith Atwater sensual and moving as Meg, Russell Wade and Rita Corday totally convincing as Fettes and Mrs. Marsh, little Sharyn Moffet playing with scarcely a touch of saccharine.

Robert Wise remembers *THE BODY SNATCHER* as "one of my 7 or 8 favorite films" of the 40 he has now made, and indeed, he directed with elan, obviously savoring the dramatic possibilities. He masterfully blended the Lewton standard of scenic beauty (e.g., the lovely opening shot of shepherds moving a flock through an Edinburgh street) with moody atmosphere and a repertoire of now-classic shock moments: the chilling graveyard raid, in which Karloff viciously slays a little dog loyally guarding the grave of its master; a Lewton "bus," in which Gray's horse suddenly moves his head into the camera at a tense, beautifully-timed moment; the murder of the street singer, in which Gray's car-

riage clip-clops behind the singing lass down a dark street, until they vanish into the blackness—and the singing suddenly stops mid-note; two wild fights, one as Gray "Burkes" Joseph, the other (watched by a cat, in a touch worthy of James Whale) as MacFarlane kills Gray; a close-up of the murdered Lugosi's head, pulled up out of the brine vat; and, of course, the climactic apparition scene, as Daniell hysterically rides his runaway carriage through the rainstorm, Karloff's naked, ghastly cadaver bouncing against him, the skeletal arms perversely trying to embrace the screaming doctor. Here, Lewton and Wise bring the ancient but potent fear of a dead body gloriously to macabre life, and the vignette survives, as James Agee wrote in *Time* in 1945, "as all-out, hair-raising a climax to a horror film as you are ever likely to see."

Only one Val Lewton horror film would follow: RKO's 1946 *BED-LAM*, directed by Mark Robson, starring Boris Karloff. Departing RKO, Lewton would make only 3 tepid films: *MY OWN TRUE LOVE* (Paramount, 1948), *PLEASE BELIEVE ME* (MGM, 1950), and *APACHE DRUMS* (Universal, 1951). He was far too sensitive for the cutthroat Hollywood system; near the end of his life Lewton's secretaries would hear him weeping alone in his office. On March 14, 1951, a heart attack killed the 46-year-old producer. At the funeral, his friend Alan Napier gave the eulogy, indicting the film industry for Lewton's early death. Said Napier, "My agent who was present, told me, 'There wasn't a dry eye in the house, Alan'—which would have made Val laugh. He had always been trying to find me a good part in one of his pictures, and here I was having a triumph at his funeral."

Robert Wise, of course, went on to a very celebrated career as a director of films of every genre, including five special ventures into the realm of *cinéfantastique*: *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (Fox, 1951), *THE HAUNTING* (MGM, 1963), *THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN* (Universal, 1971), *AUDREY ROSE* (MGM, 1977), and *STAR TREK* (Paramount, 1980). To this day he credits Val Lewton as the most tremendous influence on his career. □



# LETTERS



## ELLISON VS. THE TERMINATOR

In response to your magazine's article on THE TERMINATOR dispute between Harlan Ellison and James Cameron [15:4:4], I say, "Who cares?" I really do not believe that Cameron actually started out with the intention to steal from Ellison. In the film industry it would be too risky, too noticeable.

I watched THE OUTER LIMITS too when I was a kid. It seems as though a lot of young directors were influenced by television of yesterday. Directors like Joe Dante and Robert Zemeckis to name a few. Does it really matter where a person's source of inspiration comes from?

You can find similarities in almost anything if you really look for them. I will continue to support creative people like James Cameron and Gale Anne Hurd.

Robert J. Raucii  
Oak Park, IL

You might be interested to know that in addition to Ellison's episodes of the OUTER LIMITS there is an episode by another writer which could possibly have been an influence for THE TERMINATOR. The title of this episode is "The Man Who Was Never Born." It stars Martin Landau as a man from the future who returns to the present to kill the father of a man who is responsible for the chemical/biological devastation of Earth's population. The episode was written by Anthony Lawrence, and directed by Leonard Horn.

I wonder what else could come out of the past to haunt THE TERMINATOR?

Jim Adams  
Charlotte, NC

Funny that Harlan Ellison is so upset about THE TERMINATOR's

creators allegedly ripping him off. His story "Shatterday" seemed to me unduly influenced by an earlier TWILIGHT ZONE episode starring Jack Klugman.

John Schnell  
South Orange, NJ

## UNIVERSAL PUTS FILMS THEMES INTO PRACTICE

Since your story on BRAZIL [15:4:8], Universal scrapped the film's September opening and decided to severely re-edit the film for American release, against director Terry Gilliam's wishes. Originally set for release in February 1985—and now pushed back to early 1986—the film is being whittled away by the distributor with the intention of cutting the 2 hour, 22 minute running time in order to enhance "the commercial viability of the film," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Rumors have also surfaced of a new "happy ending" to the futuristic satire.

Yet overseas, where it was released months ago, BRAZIL's acclaim has been unanimous, the critics and the public calling it one of the best films of the year, as well as one of the most original fantasies of all time. So the question arises, why touch the finished film at all? The answer: money. That's what it comes down to, with artistic expression taking a back seat to the dollar bill... Nothing new there, but shouldn't things be different?

Whether the distributors agree with the finished product or not—whether in its length, tone, or topicality—they should leave the artists,

the directors, and the scriptwriters to their own personal vision. In the case of BRAZIL, I doubt that Universal Pictures even understands the film's message of creative repression and the abuse of power, because they are only reinforcing these themes by tampering with the film.

As anyone can see from past history, it's the films that transcend the banal, the ordinary, and the expected norm, that stand the test of time and break new boundaries in the cinema. Imagine if 2001 or ERASERHEAD had been treated in the same manner by money-hungry business executives. The films would have been reduced to a form accessible to any 10 year-old or never released at all, and moviegoers would have lost some major works of art, as well as entertainment.

If you feel Universal pictures should respect the rights of the filmmakers; and in particular, if you would prefer to view the complete, unedited version of BRAZIL, instead of a truncated, commercialized one, write the distributor: Universal Pictures, Sid Sheinberg, President, 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City CA 91608. If nothing else, it's a first step toward changing distributor attitudes.

Steven Puchalski  
Syracuse, NY

## RETURN OF THE LIVING CORRECTIONS

Makeup artist Tony Gardner pointed out to me a couple of inaccuracies in our Dan O'Bannon interview on RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD [15:4:16]: 1) When O'Bannon refers

to "the articulated zombies whose jaws open and eyebrows move," you insert in parenthesis "the half-corpse;" actually O'Bannon is referring to the modified tarman head—the half-corpse's eyebrows don't move. 2) Despite what O'Bannon may say about Stout resculpting the tarman for Munns, both Stout and Gardner informed me that the first sculpture Stout ever did in his life was the "biting mask" for Trash, used in a couple of insert close-ups, which was done after Munns had left the film. As production designer, Stout certainly may have supervised Munns' work on the tarman, but he never claimed to have sculpted it himself. Had I known O'Bannon was making such outrageous statements, I would have given Munns a better chance to defend himself.

Steve Biodrowski  
Los Angeles, CA

On page 28 you quote me explaining that Return Productions wanted the "split-dog" to be a black Labrador puppeteered through the set, and they ended up with a terrier. In actuality, I wanted to do the Labrador, (operated similar to Rick Baker's baby from STARMAN) but Return Productions didn't have the time or the money (and it was already planned to shoot on an existing, real concrete floor), so my plans were scratched and I went with theirs.

Tony Gardner  
Los Angeles, CA

## NEXT TIME WESTMORE, THIS MAN DESERVES A PINHOLE!

There was a point of information that was incorrect in your article on CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR [15:4:30], and I felt strongly enough about it to bring it to your attention.

The article stated that Michelle Burke was responsible for making up certain characters, among them the tribal magician "Creb." That is, in fact, not so. Michael Westmore was the man who not only sculpted the appliances for Creb, he also applied the makeup every day. No other makeup artist at any time applied Creb's makeup, only Mr. Westmore. If there is any one person who would know this to be true it is myself, I played Creb.

By the way, there was no "pinhole" for me to see through, in the appliance.

James Remar  
New York, NY

[Michelle Burke, Westmore's co-supervisor on the film's makeup, applied the makeup on Zoug, played



"Hey Harold, You finished working on those spaceship blasters yet? Harold? Damn, where's he got to now?"



by mime Tony Montanaro, and on Daryl Hannah as Ayla.]

## ILLICIT STEPHEN KING SHORTS

Since your July issue Granite Entertainment Group bought the license to be the legal distributor of THE WOMAN IN THE ROOM and THE BOOGEYMAN [15:3:12]. Should any readers run across videotapes not distributed by Granite, please notify Granite by calling toll free 1-800-228-1801 (1-800-772-6900 if you call from California.)

By the way, a few mistakes appear in your article about my film, THE WOMAN IN THE ROOM. The actress who portrays the titular woman is Dee Croxton, not Broxton, and Brian Libby (that lovable karate-monster from SILENT RAGE) has no "e" in his name. These are tiny quibbles, but Dee and Brian are tremendously gifted actors and I hated seeing their names spelled incorrectly.

Also, THE WOMAN IN THE ROOM isn't really a "student" film, as your article states. Producer Greg Melton and I—both 23 years old when the film was shot—were no longer attending any sort of institute of formal education, and had no support from any school or university.

We and our cohorts had only our own foolhardiness and determination to rely upon.

Frank Darabont,  
Director  
New York, NY

## A WORD FROM THE OTHER SIDE

In your May issue you state about LABYRINTH [15:2:16]: "Henson has abandoned a script by Monty Python alumnus Terry Jones." May I tell you that he is alive and well and working on our movie. You also state "special effects by ILM." ILM is painting some mattes on this film. You should not assume that the special effects will be by Industrial Light & Magic. The special effects are being handled by George Gibbs (who incidentally won an Oscar for INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM) and have been in preparation since July 1984. The optical effects will be handled by Roy Field (Oscar for SUPERMAN).

Sometimes you guys in America forget there is a film industry on the other side of the Atlantic which is just as busy as Hollywood. We also have some of the best special effects teams.

George Gibbs  
London, England

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Moon, This Island Earth, The Invisible Ray, Forbidden Planet, Godzilla, King of the Monsters

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Werewolf in a Girls Dormitory, Corridors of Blood, Attack of the Killer Shrews, Eegah!, Creature From the Haunted Sea, Creature Walks Among Us, Horror of Party Beach, The Old Dark House (Bill Castle), The Mysterious Island (original '29), The Bride of Frankenstein, The Skull, Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman, From Hell it Came, Gorilla at Large, Bride of the Monster, The Haunting, The Mummy ('31), Frankenstein 1970, The Slime People, Dr. Blood's Coffin, Mighty Joe Young, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, The Manster, The Exorcist, The Crawling Hand, The Haunted Strangler, Curse of the Demon, The Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas, The Little Shop of Horrors, The Fearless Vampire Killers, The Phantom of the Opera ('42), The Devil Dolls (Tod Browning), The Climax (Karloff)

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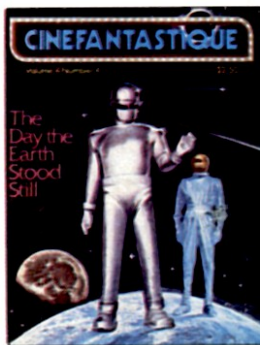
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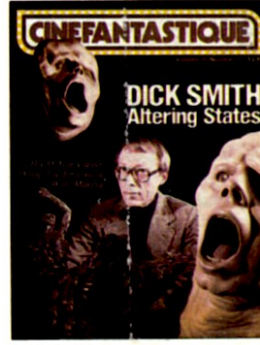
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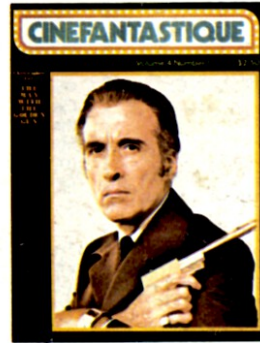
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